# In the Matter Of:

### UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

NO. 1:16-cv-03088-ELR

## **JUSTIN HILL**

March 06, 2023

30b6



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March 06, 2023

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 1 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA 2 ATLANTA DIVISION 3 4 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ) CIVIL ACTION 5 Plaintiff, ) NO. 1:16-cv-03088-ELR 6 vs. 7 STATE OF GEORGIA, 8 Defendants. 9 10 11 30(b)(6) VIDEOTAPE DEPOSITION OF 12 GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 13 Through Its Representative 14 JUSTIN HILL 15 16 Monday, March 6, 2023 4:03 p.m., EST 17 18 19 20 HELD AT: 21 GaDOE 205 Jesse Hill Jr Drive, S.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30334 22 23 WANDA L. ROBINSON, CRR, CCR, No. B-1973 24 Certified Shorthand Reporter/Notary Public 25



March 06, 2023

1	APPEARANCES OF COUNSEL
2	
3	Appearing on Behalf of the Plaintiff:
4	
5	CLAIRE CHEVRIER, ESQUIRE U.S. Department of Justice
6	Civil Rights Division 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
7	Washington, D.C. 20579 T: 202.305.6630 F: 202.305.3488
8	E-mail: Claire.Chevrier@usdoj.gov
9	
10	
11	Appearing on Behalf of the Defendant and the Witness:
12	
13	MELANIE JOHNSON, ESQUIRE Robbins Alloy Belinfante Littlefield LLC
14	500 14th Street, N.W. Atlanta, Georgia 30318
15	T: 404.856.3261 E-mail: mjohnson@robbinsfirm.com
16	
17	
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22	
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March 06, 2023

1 ALSO PRESENT VIA ZOOM: 2 U.S. Attorney's Office: 3 KELLY GARDNER, ESQUIRE 4 SANDRA LeVERT, ESQUIRE 5 LAURA CASSIDY-TAYLOE, ESQUIRE 6 VICTORIA LILL, ESQUIRE 7 JESSICA POLANSKY, ESQUIRE 8 Robbins Law Firm: 9 10 DANIELLE HERNANDEZ, ESQUIRE 11 12 13 ALSO PRESENT: 14 STACEY SUBER-DRAKE, ESQUIRE Georgia Department of Education 15 16 PATRICK MURPHY, Videographer 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25



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1	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are now on record.
2	Today's is Monday, March 6, 2023, and the
3	time is 4:03 p.m. Eastern Time.
4	This begins the videoconference deposition
5	of 30(b)(6) witness Justin Hill, taken in the
6	matter of the United States of America versus
7	State of Georgia, Case No. 1-16-CV 03088 ELR,
8	pending in U.S. District Court for the Northern
9	District of Georgia, Atlanta Division.
10	My name is Patrick Murphy. I'm the remote
11	videographer today, and the remote court
12	reporter is Wanda Robinson. We both represent
13	Esquire Deposition Solutions.
14	If counsel could please introduce
15	themselves and their colleagues for the record,
16	and then the court reporter will swear in the
17	witness.
18	MS. CHEVRIER: My name is Claire Chevrier
19	for the United States. I'm virtually
20	accompanied by my colleagues Laura Tayloe,
21	Kelly Gardner, Victoria Lill, Jessica Polansky,
22	Allison Ewers, and Sandra LeVert.
23	MS. JOHNSON: Melanie Johnson for State of
24	Georgia, joined virtually by my co-counsel
25	Danielle Hernandez, and I'm joined in person by



1 Stacey Suber-Drake, the corporate 2 representative for the Department of Education. 3 JUSTIN HILL, 30(b)(6), 4 5 being duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows: 6 7 EXAMINATION 8 9 BY MS. CHEVRIER: 10 Good afternoon, Mr. Hill. 0 11 For the record, I'd like to reintroduce 12 myself. My name is Claire Chevrier. I'm a trial 13 attorney in the Educational Opportunity Section of 14 the Civil Rights Division of the United States 15 Department of Justice. I represent the United 16 States in this lawsuit and will be taking your 17 deposition today. 18 Can you please state and spell your name 19 for the record. 20 Α Justin Hill, J-U-S-T-I-N, H-I-L-L. 21 0 Thank you. 22 I'm sure your attorney has explained much 23 of this to you, but we are basically just going to 24 have a conversation. I'm going to ask you questions 25 and your answer -- your job is to answer these



questions honestly and completely. Okay? 1 2 Α Sure. You were just sworn to the truth by the 3 0 court reporter. The oath you just took is the same 4 5 oath that you would take if were you testifying in a 6 court of law and puts you under the same obligation 7 to tell the truth that you would be under in court. Do you understand? 8 9 Α I do. 10 My questions and your answers will be 11 recorded by the court reporter. Please understand 12 that you will need to speak clearly and answer all 13 questions orally so that the court reporter can 14 capture your answers accurately. For example, she 15 won't be able to record a nod or a head shake. 16 Okay? 17 Α Okay. 18 If at any time the computer freezes, I 0 19 think likely it just practiced, or there is a lag, 20 please feel free to let me know, especially if it's 21 affecting your ability to hear or answer questions. 22 Α Okay. 23 The other thing you and I will need to do 24 is try to avoid talking over one another, which I

recognize may be more difficult to do because we're



1	communicating virtually. I will do my best not to
2	interrupt you when you're answering, and I will ask
3	that you do your best to let me finish when my
4	question let me finish my questions before
5	starting to answer. Okay?
6	A Understood.
7	Q If at any point you do not understand a
8	question, you should feel free to stop me and say
9	so. I will then try to clarify the question. Okay?
10	A Understood.
11	Q Note that your attorney may occasionally
12	object to my questions. This is to put their
13	objections and the issue on the record. It does not
14	mean that you shouldn't answer the questions.
15	Unless counsel tells you not to answer, you could go
16	ahead and do so.
17	Understand?
18	A Understand.
19	Q If you want to take a break for any
20	reason, that's fine. I just ask that if there is a
21	question pending or if you're in the middle of an
22	answer, that you finish answering before taking a
23	break.
24	Understand?
25	A Understand.



1	Q Sometimes it happens you will give an
2	answer as completely as you can and then later on,
3	maybe five minutes or an hour later, you'll remember
4	some additional information in response to that
5	earlier question. If that happens, please tell us
6	that you would like to add something to something
7	you said earlier, and you can do that.
8	A I will do so.
9	Q Thank you. How are you feeling today?
10	A Doing well.
11	Q Good. Is there any reason why you would
12	not be able to answer my questions fully and
13	truthfully today?
14	A There are no concerns.
15	Q For example, are you taking any medication
16	that would inhibit your ability to answer my
17	questions?
18	A I'm not.
19	Q Do you have any questions for me before we
20	proceed?
21	A I do not.

- There are a few acronyms and definitions 22 that I'd like to go over to confirm that we have the 23 same understanding. Okay? 24
- I can do that. 25 Α



1	Q When I refer to "GaDOE," do you understand
2	that I mean the Georgia Department of Education?
3	A I do.
4	Q When I refer to the "GNETS" or "GNETS
5	program," do you understand that I mean the Georgia
6	Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support?
7	A I do.
8	Q When I say "regional GNETS program," do
9	you understand that I'm referring to one of the 24
10	regional GNETS programs across the State of Georgia?
11	A I do.
12	Q When I say "the State," do you understand
13	that I mean the State of Georgia?
14	A I do.
15	Q When I say "PBIS," do you understand I
16	mean Positive Behavior Interventions and Support?
17	A I do.
18	Q When I say "ODRs," do you understand that
19	I mean office discipline referrals?
20	A I do.
21	Q When I say "SWIS," do you understand that
22	I mean Schoolwide Information System?
23	A I do.
24	Q When I say "EOY," do you understand I mean
25	end of year?



1	A I do.
2	Q When I say "LRE," do you understand I mean
3	the least restrictive environment?
4	A I do.
5	Q When I say "MTSS," do you understand that
6	I mean multitiered system of support?
7	A I do.
8	Q When I say "DBHDD," do you understand that
9	I mean Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and
10	Developmental Disabilities?
11	A I do.
12	Q I'd like to show you what has been
13	previously marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 965. This
14	is the deposition notice filed with the court that
15	states that the United States served a 30(b)(6)
16	deposition notice on March 1st, 2023, for testimony
17	related to the items included in Attachment A.
18	MS. CHEVRIER: Give my colleague a second
19	to pull that up.
20	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-965 was
21	previously marked for identification.)
22	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
23	Q Mr. Hill, you should have access to scroll
24	through this document.
25	A Did you need me to go to a specific page?



1	Q Sure. Can you just scroll so we can see
2	the title of this document? Perfect.
3	Have you seen this 30(b)(6) deposition
4	notice before?
5	A I did.
6	Q When did you see it?
7	A I think a couple days ago.
8	Q And who showed it to you?
9	A Stacey Suber-Drake.
10	Q Is it your understanding that you are
11	present today to provide testimony in response to
12	the topics listed on the 30(b)(6) deposition notice
13	as Attachment A, specifically questions 14, 15, 16,
14	and 17?
15	A Correct.
16	Q And you can feel free to scroll down to
17	the Attachment A if you want to double-check it is
18	indeed 14 through 17 that you're here to provide
19	testimony about today.
20	A You want me to stop there?
21	Q Sure. Just to reconfirm, it's correct
22	you're here to provide testimony on Topics 14
23	through 17, now that you have it in front of you?
24	A That's correct.
25	Q What is the basis for your knowledge of



1	these topic areas?
2	A I helped start PBIS in the State of
3	Georgia. So we launched this in 2008. I was one of
4	the first hires for this initiative. And I also
5	have been the program manager for this initiative
6	for several years, and now this program is under me
7	in my current role.
8	Q And what is your current role at the State
9	of Georgia?
10	A My current role is associate
11	superintendent for Whole Child Supports.
12	Q And what are your job responsibilities in
13	this role?
14	A To help identify barriers to students
15	being successful. Most of those would be
16	nonacademic areas, but through the MPSS State
17	Personnel grant, which is called the SP grant, which
18	has MPSS, largely an academic model. We kind of
19	take a holistic view of just what are the barriers
20	to students achieving success.
21	Q How long have you held this role?
22	A I've held this role for about a year and a
23	half. Oh, for Whole Child? No. Since October
24	15th.

That's of this -- or last year?



Q

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1	A October 15th of 2022, correct.
2	Q Who do you report to in this role?
3	A Chief of staff Matt Jones.
4	Q And who reports to you?
5	A About 40 plus staff members that represent
6	the different elements of Whole Child Supports.
7	Q And who are your
8	A I represent
9	Q I'm sorry. Go ahead.
10	A Go ahead.
11	So it would be representatives from school
12	nursing, social workers, school-based health
13	centers, to just name a few. School safety, and
14	then the tiered support things, which would include
15	the PBIS.
16	Q And who are your direct reports?
17	A My direct reports would be Mary Lawrence
18	Salvatore, the assistant director who handles
19	health, wellness and safety; and then Jeannie
20	Morris, who is senior program manager, and she's
21	tasked with helping to merge the MTSS framework with
22	the PBIS framework in a more holistic fashion.
23	Q And then I believe you've already started
24	to do this. Can you describe the different areas of



25

your indirect reports?

1	A School-based health. So up under Mary
2	Lawrence Salvatore, the wraparound supports,
3	school-based health centers, school social workers,
4	school nurses, school safety, mental health
5	activities, and I think that's the big that's
6	the big functions.
7	Q How does your current role relate to the
8	question topics you are here to provide testimony
9	here about today?
10	A Say that again.
11	Q How does your current role relate to the
12	question topics you are here to provide testimony
13	about today?
14	A PBIS falls underneath my purview. So many
15	of those questions fall right in there.
16	Q And so PBIS falls under the Office of
17	Whole Child Supports; is that correct?
18	A That's correct.
19	Q Did you receive any information from
20	anyone other than counsel that you will be relying
21	on to respond to questions about these topics?
22	A Just myself.
23	Q What is your highest level of education?
24	A I have an Ed.S. in leadership.
25	Q And where is the Ed.S. from?



1	A Georgia College and State University.
2	Q And what is the date that you received
3	that certification?
4	A I believe summer of 2015, I believe.
5	Q And how does your education background
6	relate to your current role?
7	A The education background in general is
8	obviously educational leadership. So change
9	initiative, how to conduct whole-scale strategic
10	scale-up of projects. I have a Master's in
11	curriculum instruction, so obviously looking at
12	education from academic and holistic ways as well.
13	I think both of them would relate to this.
14	Q How did your education background relate
15	to the question topics you're here to testify about
16	today?
17	A Um, PBIS is obviously a framework. You
18	can have it at the State level. Certainly we build
19	a strategic framework, a coaching network to make
20	that happen. Certainly education leadership speaks
21	to the scale-up of almost any initiative, really, of
22	which PBIS is one.
23	From the scale-up from the initial
	-

THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry.



25

You're

going to have to slow down. 1 Who are these 2 people again? Say them again. From the scale-up --3 4 Rob Horner, Dr. Rob Horner, from the University of Oregon, and Dr. George Sugai at 5 the University of Connecticut, those two individuals 6 7 certainly represent the founders of PBIS from the schoolwide perspective. And within their research, 8 9 and certainly mentioned that once they had the 10 schools that they saw some replication of good 11 outcomes, they started thinking by how do we go to 12 scale for this. And much of the going to scale 13 speaks directly to leadership activities across the 14 State, the region, to even the local level, to build 15 capacity. Certainly education leadership speaks to all of that. 16 17 MS. JOHNSON: That was the court reporter 18 to instruct you that if you to speak too 19 quickly, she'll chime in and let you know. 20 THE WITNESS: Sure. 21 0 What is the GNETS program? 22 Α What is the GNETS program? 23 Yes. 0 24 Α Well, when students are not being 25 successful, certainly in the regular education



1	environment, it's my understanding GNETS is an
2	attempt to create therapeutic supports for students
3	whose IEP dictates they aren't successful within the
4	traditional school setting.
5	Q What are the goals sorry, go ahead.
6	A No. I think it's well, I think it may
7	speak to what you're asking.
8	I think the goals are to provide a
9	therapeutic approach that would hopefully lead to
10	integration back to school environment in time.
11	Q What is the target population of the GNETS
12	program?
13	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
14	You can answer.
15	A Can I answer?
16	Special education students, students with
17	IEPs.
18	Q When did you first become aware of the
19	GNETS program?
20	A I think when I was first hired at the DOE,
21	2006.
22	Q How did you first become aware of the
23	GNETS program?
24	A I believe I took a site visit to meet a
25	director in Forest Park, Georgia. Her name was



1	Laura Riffle, and Laura Riffle, who is a private
2	consultant today, from Kansas. She was working at
3	the GNETS, and she had was launching the PBIS
4	initiative, which was a grant that they called EBIS.
5	It's the same thing. And we just had a planning
6	session and I never actually walked inside the walls
7	of a GNETS until that day.
8	Q And you said she was working at the GNETS.
9	Was that for the GNETS program as a whole or one of
10	the regional GNETS programs?
11	A It was at the GNETS. It's on Ash Street
12	in Forest Park.
13	Q Thank you. Have you read any court
14	filings in connection with this lawsuit?
15	A Do I have any court filings? I do not.
16	Q Have you read any court filings in
17	connection with this lawsuit, other than the one
18	that's currently pulled up in front of us?
19	A I have not.
20	Q Am I correct you are being represented by
21	Melanie Johnson from the Robbins firm for this
22	deposition today?
23	A I am.
24	Q Did you talk with anyone to prepare for



this deposition today?

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- Q Did you meet with counsel to prepare for this deposition?
- A Just to go over the questions I was going to be asked, if that's what you mean.
  - Q And who was present for that conversation?
- A It was on the phone. I believe Melanie might have been there and Stacey Suber-Drake, and Tiffany Taylor. Nicholas, who was before me, may have been there.
- Q Is that Nicholas Handville?
- 12 A Handville, correct. I don't think there
  13 were any other voices there that I remember.
- 14 Q How long did you meet?
- 15 A I think I was on the phone call for maybe 16 15 minutes. I had to go to another presentation.
- Q Did you read any deposition transcripts in this litigation prior to joining today?
- 19 A I have not.
- Q Do you talk with anyone else outside of counsel and those who were on that phone call about this deposition today?
- 23 A I have not.
- Q Apart from the documents shown to you by counsel, did you look at any other documents to



1	prepare	for	today's	deposition?

- A Documents that we have on the web page that's related to this, so that I can give you accurate information data.
  - O And --

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- A For example --
- 7 Q Sorry. Go ahead.
  - A It's okay. So, for example, the questions about how many people are implementing SWIS, or how many schools pertain to PBIS, things like that.
    - Q Which websites specifically did you view?
- 12 A PBIS webpage, if we have them, on GaDOE's 13 PBIS page.
  - Q Did you review any other documents or websites?
    - A No. I just had the memos that we put together that have the training numbers that we collect internally, and the salary information that was requested as well.
    - Q So in addition to the PBIS website and the memos that you put together, that have training numbers and the salary information that was requested, did you review any other documents?
    - A That's it.
  - Q And what are the memos that you put



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A A memo that has the total number of schools, programs and GNETS that have been trained in the various tiers of PBIS implementation. Also the pullouts with GNETS. And then how many of those schools in Georgia currently use SWIS.

Q And I would like to --

MS. JOHNSON: Just.

MS. CHEVRIER: Sorry. Go ahead.

MS. JOHNSON: So he has those notes with him so he can give accurate numbers, and we're prepared to give you access to these as well.

MS. CHEVRIER: Thank you. I was about to request copies of those as well, in addition to anything else mail he's referencing.

A We also have a budget, so we made sure we had the salaries of all employees that help with PBIS, such as a breakdown of how much everybody makes and their education level.

In addition, on that web page you'll see -- because there's a question about fidelity of implementation. So all the particulars, nuances of the fidelity memos that are online are also with me, be made available to you as well.

Q Thank you.



1		Did do you anything else to prepare for
2	today's d	eposition?
3	А	Nope.
4	Q	Have you ever been deposed before?
5	А	I have not. This is the first.
6	Q	Have you ever been a plaintiff in a
7	lawsuit?	
8	А	I have not.
9	Q	Have you ever been a defendant in a
10	lawsuit?	
11	А	No, I have not.
12	Q	One moment.
13		You've already mentioned this, but in your
14	role do y	ou have any involvement with Positive
15	Behaviora	l Interventions and Supports in Georgia?
16	A	I do.
17	Q	In what capacity?
18	A	I supervise the implementation throughout
19	the State	through Ms. Jeannie Morris.
20	Q	And what is PBIS?
21	A	PBIS is a prevention-based framework that
22	tries to	kind of take a look at a learning
23	environme	nt, and instead of sitting there reacting
24	to the en	vironment, look at certain behaviors and
25	assume th	at behaviors serve a purpose and it can be



1	predicted to a degree by looking at data. And as
2	you take a prevention-based approach, and with PBIS
3	we certainly looked at the health prevention model
4	from the '60s, and with George Sugai and Rob Horner,
5	they said we can actually build an environment where
6	we can prevent, largely through adult behavior
7	change, and make the environment positive, that soon
8	we can see students hopefully being in the
9	classrooms learning, academic, certainly displaying
10	behavior, appropriate behavior.

Q Can you describe the basic structure of PBIS at the school level?

A At the school level you try to put in certain features, like schoolwide agreements. What are the schoolwide expectations that perhaps the faculty can rally around and say, let's not leave certain things to chance, let's define the behaviors that we wish to see, let's try to model those behaviors, in context. So if we want to teach them to be respectful, show them to be respectful, model what respectful behavior is. And certainly try to find contextual incentives, hopefully naturally occurring, that we can get behavior change.

The majority of the students, at least 80 percent, Tier 1, who largely wouldn't go to the



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office for behavior errors, so to speak, and for students that don't respond to some of those proactive pieces that are in place, sometimes there's need for additional instruction, and we call

that Tier II interventions potentially.

And hopefully there's a school-based problem solving team that's going to look at the data and find out, well, how have we -- how successful have we been. Have we put in all the necessary features that we see 80 percent compliance with these things? How are the -- who are the students that aren't responding? How can we best serve their needs.

So you try to create some Tier II things that would be small group settings, that maybe reinforce some of those expectations and maybe need a little bit more reinforcement, some additional practice with those behaviors.

And for the students who aren't responding with that strategy, certainly there could be a need, an argument made, that more intensive things might be needed.

- Q What role does PBIS play in school climate?
  - A If you think about school climate, school



1	climate is certainly the perception of people that
2	are in an organization, right. I feel good about
3	where I'm at, about where I work, and it's based on
4	some common experiences that we have.
5	So A good school climate is a destination.
6	Sometimes it's nice to think that PBIS is a vehicle
7	to get there.
8	Q Is PBIS useful for students with
9	disabilities?
10	A Most certainly it is, because students
11	with disabilities are like all those students. They
12	need predictable learning environments that are
13	positive and supportive, and PBIS certainly adheres
14	to that as well. PBIS
15	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
16	A I'm sorry. It's for all students.
17	Q Would you agree that PBIS can be useful
18	for decreasing challenging behaviors for students
19	with disabilities?
20	A Yeah, I do agree with that assessment.
21	Q I'm going to show you what we are marking
22	as Plaintiff's Exhibit 970.

This is the strategic plan 2014 to 2024

MS. CHEVRIER: I'm going to ask my



for PBIS in the State of Georgia.

23

24

1	colleague to share that with you.
2	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-970 was
3	marked for identification.)
4	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
5	Q Mr. Hill, you should have access to flip
6	through this document.
7	A Okay.
8	Q Can you confirm that this is indeed a PBIS
9	strategic plan for GaDOE from 2014 to 2024?
10	A Correct. It's under revision but that is
11	what we published.
12	Q And do you recognize this document?
13	A I do.
14	Q Let's turn to Page 4, or I'm going to ask
15	you to turn to Page 4.
16	Do you see where it says under the heading
17	Introduction, quote: "In 2007, the Georgia
18	Department of Education (GaDOE) Division for Special
19	Education Services, established the Positive
20	Behavior Support Unit to provide professional
21	learning and technical assistance in tiered
22	behavioral supports to address the high rates of
23	exclusionary disciplinary practices used in Georgia
24	K-12 schools, including the disproportionate rates
25	of suspension of students with disabilities"?



1 A I do.

Q Is it fair to say that GaDOE's focus on PBIS began around 2007?

A It did officially from the schoolwide perspective when we had a relationship with the National Technical Assistance Center. But I was hired in 2006. In many ways our first initial task was to take Functional Behavior Assessment skills and teach student support teams who were already kind of at that tiered three level and try to teach those skills to school teams. And we decided to actually launch a more comprehensive approach at it when we started partnering with George Sugai and the National Technical Assistance Center for PBIS, and then we started launching a more strategic approach instead of just scattered trainings with -- and give skills to just random school teams, to have a more comprehensive way to approach the problems.

Q So is it more accurate to say that GaDOE's focus on PBIS began around 2006 and became focused on schoolwide supports in 2007?

A I think so. I mean you could say that the PBIS philosophy was certainly invested in in 2006, but from, as you've spoken, to a more comprehensive way, so 2007 to 2008 is very accurate.



Q Do you see on the same page where it says, quote: "The PBIS unit quickly discovered that in many cases, schools did not have a continuum of behavioral interventions nor did they have established processes of data review or analysis in place to prevent or address problems before they reached a level resulting in exclusionary practices like suspension"?

- A That's correct.
- Q And do you see where it says, quote: "The Georgia Department of Education decided to implement the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) framework to improve school climate in Georgia's K-12 schools"?
- A That's right.
- Q You've already touched upon this, but in what ways did GaDOE implement the PBIS framework to improve school climate?
  - A The No. 1 way is that we actually partnered with the National Technical Assistance Center to say how can Georgia do this comprehensibly and do it right, and to make sure that we're attached with national coaches, national technical assistants.
    - So we do this very comprehensively, and



- 1 Dr. Heather George, who was the co-director at the
- 2 | Florida project, became our national TA, and the
- 3 | National Technical Assistant Center, you can
- 4 | imagine, the research cadre, looking down across all
- 5 | the states and trying to learn the lessons of
- 6 implementation science, where is it going well,
- 7 | please inform the national research.
- 8 So in many ways she was helping us look at
- 9 what are the States doing during their journey, so
- 10 | we could have a more successful implementation as we
- 11 move forward. And we still maintain that
- 12 | relationship with Dr. Heather George even today.
- 13 Q In what ways did GaDOE implement the PBIS
- 14 framework to improve school climate?
- A Similarly we had a DOE team initially,
- 16 just the DOE team, and our job was to go and teach
- 17 | -- to introduce the concept to a district
- 18 superintendent, certainly in the rural areas if it
- 19 was valid, because the metro would be some of the
- 20 cabinet members. And try to speak to the components
- 21 necessary to achieve this success long-term.
- 22 Many times, at the early stages, it was
- 23 looked at as an experiment from some district's
- 24 point of view. Well, I'm not sure what this is. So
- 25 we take small cohorts for the first couple of years.



1	But as years progressed, and we certainly leaned on
2	the national researchers, we learned the best way to
3	do this is not to have scattered school trainings
4	but to certainly invest in certain agreements with
5	districts and say a district needs to have a team
6	dedicated to looking at their climate data, which
7	would include, of course, discipline data and some
8	of their own practices, look at their student codes
9	of conduct.

And we started making -- as the years went on, we say we need to make sure there's a dedicated staff member at the district to provide that coaching support ongoing so that the State of Georgia, and it was limited to a team at that time, maybe four members. We can't train the entire state and coach the entire state if we're going to go to scale.

So having district coordinators in place that we could build some behavior expertise was a way we could start building some additional capacity, start expanding our approach. Because we only have four people trying to install something as comprehensive as PBIS, it would take a really long time, and in time we were able to convince lawmakers to invest with .5 SDE, start putting school climate

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1	specialists in many of the Regional Educational
2	Service Agencies, which Georgia has 16, and that
3	became some seed money to take a state, region, and
4	then district capacity building campaign, so to
5	speak.
6	Q What is the official status of the PBIS
7	framework within GaDOE today?
8	MS. JOHNSON: Object form.
9	You can answer.
10	A The team right now has been moved over to
11	from teaching and learning over with me in Whole
12	Child. And my task is to take the behavior side of
13	MTSS and the academic side of MTSS and to merge the
14	frameworks into a more holistic way to deliver
15	supports to students.
16	Georgia is not the only state attempting
17	this. Washington State being one of them. Michigan
18	has been successful doing this, Wisconsin and
19	Florida.
20	What we don't want to see happen is
21	schools start forming so many teams to do
22	comprehensive problem solving that we're not being
23	very efficient. So the solution is not always for a
24	school team or for a high school, for example, to
25	have 30 teams dedicated to similar things. We want



1	to make sure that we're having teams to be more
2	effective and efficient and asking some of the same
3	preventative questions, because ultimately it's
4	about students being successful and what are the
5	various things that make students successful.
6	That's the current status. We're still
7	training schools in comprehensive PBIS, but we're
8	certainly starting to form plans and partnerships on
9	how this merging would go look like on the ground
10	level.
11	Q Does GaDOE currently require Georgia
12	schools to use the PBIS framework?
13	A It's entirely voluntary. Research
14	indicates that forced implementation of PBIS
15	certainly yields very poor fruits. Louisiana being
16	one example. Alabama trying to do so temporarily,
17	also proving to be a very bad example.
18	Q Does GaDOE require regional GNETS programs
19	to use the PBIS framework?
20	A I think there was a time that we did. I'm
21	unaware if we still maintain that. I know SWIS
22	participation, if we're looking at their data, is
23	certainly voluntary.
24	Q Does GaDOE encourage Georgia schools to



use the PBIS framework?

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- Q And what about regional GNETS programs presently now that it's optional for them?
- A I don't supervise the GNETS, so I can't speak to the supervisor in special education that provides that. But I do know that the GNETS directors or their designees are certainly invited to attend all of our regional meetings, whether they are in person or online, and I do know that several of them still implement it.
- Q Does GaDOE currently support Georgia schools with their adoption of the PBIS framework?
  - A They do.
- 14 Q In what ways?
  - A They do so with -- the team that has been assembled at the State, that falls under me, the large cadre of professionals that certainly deliver training to schools, training to school climate specialists to build regional capacity, in concert with them, certainly train brand-new district coordinators of the PBIS framework to make sure that they can sustain implementation, which training takes place, because implementing a framework is not a pray-and-spray approach. It's not just hiring a professional trainer to train the school in a couple

1	of days and pretend that large-scale change is going
2	to take place. It's going to take a couple of years
3	for schools to change their practices.
4	So this coaching infrastructure from the
5	State, the region, and the district level certainly
6	helps take that on.
7	Q Are there any regulations in Georgia
8	applicable to PBIS?
9	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
10	You can answer.
11	A If you could repeat that, please.
12	Q Sure. Are there any regulations in
13	Georgia that are applicable to PBIS?
14	MS. JOHNSON: Same objection.
15	You can answer.
16	A I'm not aware.
17	Q How many counties or school districts in
18	Georgia have implemented PBIS?
19	A About 60 percent. You know, we have
20	districts that sign the agreements and have to do
21	recommitments. Right now we're at at the end of
22	2000 and 22 '21, '22, we had 1,400, down to 419
23	schools and programs implementing. We think by the
24	end of this year we're going to be at 1,500.
25	It would be approximately 60. If you want



1 the exact number of districts, I can retrieve that
2 for you. I don't have it with me today.

Q Thank you.

If a school district agrees to participate in the PBIS framework, does that mean each of the schools within the district will utilize the PBIS framework?

A Not necessarily, because some districts can be as large as Gwinnett, our state largest, and we usually say that no matter how many schools participate and give numbers voluntarily, we don't mandate that every single school. We certainly offer encouragement them to consider implementing in all the schools. But all we ask is that there's a district team that's informed to help sustain the limitation of where the training and coaching has taken place, and that will just build sustainability over time. Otherwise we just fall into the rut of a pray-and-spray approach to change.

Q Is it correct you just said that about 1,400 schools in Georgia have implemented PBIS and that you're hoping it will approach 1,500 by the end of the school year?

A We think that's correct. 1,500. The 1,419 is -- that's the number.



It's important to realize schools, plus 1 2 programs, because GNETS is not a school, it's a 3 So we can put that together. program. 4 How many schools have implemented Tier I of the PBIS framework? 5 That would be 1,419 and approaching 1,500. Α 6 7 0 And how many schools have implemented Tier II of the PBIS framework? 8 9 Α Just north of 400. About 403 as of end of '21-22 school year, and we'll be calculating those 10 11 numbers for this school year here in a couple of 12 months. 13 How many schools have implemented Tier III 14 of the PBIS framework? 15 Tier III is typically not provided by us. Α 16 We certainly concluded developing our Tier III, our 17 advanced tiers training curriculum, but for some of 18 the Tier III trainings that the GNETS might 19 participate in, I think that's been used -- been 20 facilitated by the Georgia State University, Dr. Daniel Crimmins. 21 22 Do you have information about how many 23 schools currently implement a Tier III framework for 24 PBIS?



I do not.

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- 0 Go ahead. 3
  - Α Tier III has been delivered through Daniel Crimmins and his staff at Georgia State University, and I don't have his training records. But in the interim we have just completed our draft, our training curriculum, so we can began to deliver that in concert.
    - I understand a school might not need to provide Tier III services based on the students that happen to be enrolled in the school at that time; is that correct?
  - Α Say that again.
  - 0 Students are put into different tiers based on their needs; is that correct?
  - Well, I think it would be inaccurate to Α say a student is placed in tiers. I think getting tiered support services. You know, it's a technical difference. But they get Tier III supports, because a student could need Tier III supports in reading but maybe not need Tier III supports in mathematics.
  - So they could be receiving, you know, full Tier I kind of instruction environments that just need temporary support in this environment.



1 Does that help?

Q Yes. Thank you.

It's possible that a school one year might not need to provide Tier III services for behavior but might in a different year require -- need to provide Tier III services based on its student population; is that correct?

A I don't think I understand because I don't think that's correct. If you can say that again.

Q Sure. What, what would require a student to receive Tier III services for behavior?

A You're going to need Tier III support.

Usually it's going to get into the area of potentially an SST team essentially, and then you're going to move and progress to an IEP consideration, which is most intensive behavior supports. But that would be a determination by the IEP team.

Q So is it possible that a particular school one year would not have any students requiring Tier III supports but another year might have a student requiring Tier III supports?

A If the students don't have an IEP -- hard to imagine any school that did have anybody that didn't have an IEP, but it's, it's possible. I never heard of a school that didn't have a single



1	student who had an IEP Tier III support. But it's
2	possible.
3	Q So you testified earlier that you don't
4	have the number of schools implementing Tier III of
5	the PBIS framework, correct?
6	A I don't know how many schools have been
7	trained in Tier III systems, which gets into FBA,
8	Functional Behavior Assessment, Behavior
9	Intervention Planning. Again, that would be
10	maintained possibly the Special Education
11	Division may have that through their relationship
12	with Georgia State University.
13	Q I was asking you questions because I'm
14	trying to get at, you know, to what extent do
15	schools have the capacity to provide Tier III
16	supports even if they don't currently need to
17	provide Tier III supports. Do you have any
18	information about a school's capacity to provide
19	Tier III supports currently in Georgia?
20	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
21	You can answer.
22	A Now, we usually have a fidelity instrument
23	called a tiered fidelity inventory, or the TFI.
24	Within the TFI, certainly there are validated
25	research questions that can help a school assess its



1	ability to analyze its Tier III support system. If
2	that makes sense.
3	Q Yes.
4	A So the fidelity inventory, that the
5	University of Oregon certainly played a major role
6	in helping to create, that we use in the State of
7	Georgia to help assess fidelity.
8	At Tier I and at Tier II, and even at Tier
9	III, a school team can ask itself certain questions
10	about its capacity to analyze and provide supports.
11	And when it's determined that they need additional
12	supports to build that Tier III system, certainly a
13	lot many times they reach out to the Georgia
14	State project where they have additional capacity,
15	while we're completing some of our improving our
16	capacity to do the same.
17	Q Is it correct that GaDOE does not track
18	how many schools in Georgia are able to provide Tier
19	III supports because that is being done through the
20	University?
21	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
22	You can answer.
23	A If you could repeat that one more time.
24	Q Sure. Is it correct that this that
25	GaDOE does not track how many schools provide Tier



- III supports because the training for that is currently being done through the University?
- A Possibly. Again, I don't know what Special Education Division is tracking.
- Q But the Office of Whole Child Supports, which the PBIS office is currently under, does not track how many schools offer Tier III supports, correct?
- A I think we're probably not talking the same. So when we say Tier III supports, you know, again, what we're doing is helping a school assess its system, its ability to provide Tier III, its ability to analyze its own data and its own system of supports, and we provide coaching around that. But if you're looking at the number of schools that are taking the TFI and are looking and analyze it to Tier III, we can do that.
- How many schools are taking the TFI and looking at the Tier III section of the TFI to determine that, I would say the answer is yes to that.
- Q Does GaDOE track how many schools have been trained by the University to offer Tier III supports?
- A I don't know.



1	Q And is it correct that as of now schools
2	would not have received training other than from the
3	University? For Tier III?
4	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
5	I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.
6	A It could have. GNETS could seek
7	additional training that maybe I wouldn't know
8	about.
9	Q Is there an expectation that eventually
10	all Georgia schools will provide Tier III services?
11	A There's the expectation that all Georgia
12	schools would desire to analyze their Tier III
13	systems or ability to provide more comprehensive
14	supports. It's really a continuous improvement
15	process of looking at their system.
16	Q In your opinion, are there occasions when
17	a student would appropriately receive Tier III
18	services even if they do not have an IEP?
19	A Well, there's, there's a between Tier
20	II and Tier III certainly there's a court mandated
21	student support team that would look at where
22	individualized students are in their individualized
23	plans and make recommendations potentially that
24	could lead to a student receiving an IEP or
25	receiving testing that could conclude a student



getting an IEP.

Q What do you mean by a court mandated team?

A The State of Georgia, and I believe also the State of Alabama, have a federal requirement to have a student support team in place, and I believe this court case goes back well over 30 years ago, I believe.

Like each school is mandated to have a student support team.

Q And can you describe the student support team?

A The student support team is a group of educators who would look at students more individually, looking at certain data sets, like formula assessment data, teacher recommendations, students' grades.

It's really looking at students who are not being successful in math, so they're not being successful in reading, maybe even behavior, and certain team -- you know, a team of those, those teachers would create SST folders, an SST charity school, to kind of look at are there common sense interventions that are being made for the individual students, are they yielding any changes? Are students being successful?



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Now, there's an assumption -- the assumptions are that the students are largely coming from a Tier I environment where solid education, solid instruction is taking place. You have the assumption that they already receive some type of evidence-based Tier II interventions, and while that's not yielding success, a student support team should be looking at those individual students, who should be few in number, and collecting some data and asking themselves, you know, how can we best support these students. And if the students aren't being successful, certainly there would be an argument to be made, maybe we should consider some additional testing, maybe the student has a learning disability, and maybe -- and it may lead to a student receiving an IEP. When do student support teams need to 0 convene for a student? Α Well, usually student support teams should, should convene or should start collecting data when students are starting to not be successful, failing grades, failing main academic areas, demonstrating behaviors. That again we would

like to see most students, if not all students, stay

in a classroom and behaving, and certainly



demonstrating behaviors that will lead to success, but sometimes they are not.

And when we start to see students with multiple referrals to the office, or ODRs, as we mentioned at the beginning, the student support team would say, you know, maybe there is something else that the student needs, what haven't we tried before to help the student be successful.

Q And who identified that a team needs to convene?

A Well, it could be an individual teacher could make a recommendation to an SST team. I certainly was a teacher in Georgia for seven years, and I've certainly made recommendations for my own students to go to a student support team because they've been in place for a long time.

And you say, why would you make the recommendation, and districts have formalized the process over the years, and sometimes those student support team folders, which would have a student's pieces of data, that were certainly held in private settings, a lot of times we pass -- and if you're at the middle school, lot of times you take those folders and they follow the student to the high school. So that the high school and ninth grade



## JUSTIN HILL 30b6 UNITED STATES vs STATE OF GEORGIA

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March 06, 2023

cadre of teachers can look and say what has the middle school done that maybe we could consider doing.

And, again, at a reasonable amount of time students still aren't showing success, you know, after some of the interventions that are taking place, then the strong argument will be made to do an IEP to a special education coordinator at the school, maybe we need to consider some other things.

- Q Do SST teams work with GNET students?

  MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
- 12 You can answer.
  - A They might. But I don't think an SST team exists at GNETS. I think an SST team might identify and have GNETS -- might have students that eventually make it to GNETS.
  - O For each team --
- 18 A But I'm not aware --
- 19 Q I'm sorry. Go ahead.
- 20 A I'm just not aware that the SST team
  21 exists at GNETS, where they're already in kind of a
  22 Tier III environment.
  - Q For each student in GNETS, should Student Support Team have already convened prior to that GNETS placement?



1	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
2	You can answer.
3	A I don't, I don't I'm not sure because
4	they already have an IEP. So once the student has
5	an IEP, they're not going to have an SST team
6	anymore.
7	Q So SST or student support teams, are
8	always in place prior to a child receiving an IEP?
9	A Correct.
10	Q And then the SST does not continue to meet
11	once a child has an IEP?
12	A That's correct.
13	Q If a student needs Tier III services or
14	supports, who provides those supports?
15	A That would be the Special Education
16	Department typically.
17	That's in the realm of behavior through
18	Functional Behavior Assessment, intervention plan
19	for students.
20	Q How many schools have received Tier III
21	PBIS training by GaDOE?
22	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
23	You can answer.
24	A I don't think that I don't know. I
25	don't think there's any, but there could have been



1	some that have been given a Tier III coaching
2	guidance, but I can't see on the special education
3	side.
4	Q Has the PBIS
5	A Again
6	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
7	A Okay. Again, we're just finished our Tier
8	III training curriculum probably two months ago, so
9	that we can build additional capacity. So we've not
10	had specific, at least from our team, Tier III
11	supports, trainings.
12	Q So currently it is accurate to say that
13	zero schools in Georgia have received any formal
14	Tier III PBIS training by GaDOE?
15	A Again, I can't speak to what special
16	education may have done, but I'm not aware of.
17	Q Is it accurate to say that zero schools in
18	Georgia have received Tier III PBIS training by the
19	PBIS team in the Office of Whole Child Supports?
20	A That's accurate.
21	Q Are there students with disabilities who
22	receive Tier III services?
23	A There are.
24	Q So Tier III services should be available
25	for students who are not designated as a special



1	education student?
2	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
3	You can answer.
4	A Again, that's a different way of looking
5	at it. If you have an IEP, you're special
6	education, you're receiving those specific
7	Individualized Education Plans.
8	When it comes to what we might provide, it
9	would be how a school can look at its Tier III
10	system of support, how successful is it being.
11	Q So just
12	A It may sound
13	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
14	A It may sound nuanced but it's not. Those
15	are two separate things.
16	Q So is it fair to say that some students
17	without disabilities receive Tier III services?
18	A They do not that I'm aware of. Tier III
19	services through an IEP is for special education
20	students.
21	Q So in your opinion
22	A Students
23	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
24	A Students with an IEP would not be
25	receiving they would not be receiving that unless



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there was more individualized from an SST team, but it's going to be very low level, not high intense interventions.

In your opinion, should Tier III PBIS supports only be available to students with special education needs?

> Object to form. MS. JOHNSON:

You can answer in your personal capacity.

Α Again, what we have the capacity to do is help a school analyze its ability to and how it's providing those supports, not giving them specifically to students. Our ability -- our job, and one of our missions, is to help a school and a district assess its system and assess its ability to build capacity to provide effective support. well are you doing? How do you know that you're doing well? How did you determine that? Because we're not providing that specifically.

Do you know how many schools in Georgia have assessed its system to determine whether they're capable of providing Tier III supports?

Α I don't have -- how many -- say it one I think the answer is the TFI, which is the Tiered Fidelity Inventory.

Q Sure. Let me --



1	A If you could just sure. Thank you.
2	Q How many schools in Georgia have assessed
3	their system to determine whether or not they have
4	the capacity to provide Tier III PBIS supports?
5	A I don't have that number with me, but I
6	certainly could retrieve that. Again, it would be
7	our looking through what's called PBIS apps, a
8	program that we partner with the University of
9	Oregon, and we say how many schools have actually
10	asked themselves and taken the Tier III section of
11	the TFI, or the Tiered Fidelity Inventory, for
12	behavior.
13	But I could get that.
14	Q I'd like to show you what will be marked
15	as Plaintiff's Exhibit 971.
16	This is an email from and it's Bates
17	No. GAA03425967.
18	(Whereupon, Plaintiff's Exhibit-971 was
19	marked for identification.)
20	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
21	Q This is an email from you, Mr. Hill, dated
22	February 22nd, 2017, to a number of people.
23	Correct?
24	A Appears to be so.

The subject is "Justin: Draft Tiered



Q

1	Timeline," correct?
2	A Yes.
3	Q It includes an attachment titled, "Draft
4	PBIS Tiered Timeline," correct?
5	A It does.
6	Q Can you please scroll to the attachment,
7	which I believe begins on Page 3.
8	Do you see there are timelines with years
9	represented from April to March?
10	A I do.
11	Q Is it correct that the first year shown
12	here would be 2017 to 2018?
13	A The years? '17?
14	Q Sure. If you scroll up to the top of the
15	document, it says is it correct it says, "70% of
16	Schools Will Score a 4 or 5 on the School Climate
17	Rating by 2020"?
18	A Correct.
19	Q And we previously stated that this email
20	was from February of 2017?
21	A Oh, yes, correct.
22	Q So I'm trying to make an inference that I
23	would like you to accept or correct, that the
24	timelines here would show the year starting with the
25	2017 to 2018 school year. Is that correct?



they walked us through how they scaled up Tier II,



1	and she certainly helped us develop, at least at the
2	beginning, a training curriculum and how we might go
3	about coaching that scale-up in Tier II.

So that was kind of our target. Like how do we get there? Because the need was, was obvious. We wanted to move in that direction, so we had to put together -- I certainly put together a plan of how we could get there.

Q So my question was, based on this draft timeline, was it the goal that Tier II implementation would be the focus for 2019-2020 school year; is that correct?

A Would be an additional focus. Tier I would always be there, but layering on additional menu, so to speak, of supports.

Certainly with schools that had a solid

Tier I in place, they were reaching out at the same

time as people that didn't have Tier I at all in

place. We need help, and then please help us move

up here. And so we had to put together a plan to do

that.

But, yes, it was a focus of our new initiatives as we maintained what we had.

Q Was the goal of focusing on Tier II implementation achieved in 2019 to 2020 school year?



A We certainly started rolling out some initial training. There were a number of districts that received kind of a cohort approach, but I would say that it was probably the years that followed that we really made the training our own and started really launching more comprehensive trainings, until of course COVID hit. But, yes, Tier II started roll

8 | -- but I wouldn't say it was like all across the 9 | State. We had limited capacity. So we had several

10 proficient specialists, and then we contracted with

11 | the University of Florida and we kind of went at it

12 together.

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I think Fayette County may have been one of our first districts that we rolled this out in.

Q Based on this timeline, was it the goal that Tier III implementation would be a focus for the 2020 to 2021 school year?

A Certainly the development of a training curriculum. I know that Dr. George said that it's not certainly just training a school, but it's more of a holistic way of assessing your Tier I system of support.

But the goal would be that we would at least be able to put this, and Tier III certainly looked like a very aggressive plan, to put that in



place	e, k	out	that	was	cert	tainly		I war	ited	d to	put	a
plan	on	how	it	could	d be	achie	ved,	and	if	the	sta	rs
were	to	ali	gn.									

- Q Based on this draft timeline, was the goal that Tier III implementation would be a focus for 2020 to 2021 achieved?
  - A No, it was not.
  - Q And why not?
- A Well, one -- well, PBIS was no longer in Special Education. It was certainly moved from Special Education to the Office of School Climate and Safety, and at that time I was the director of curriculum instruction.
- So I don't think they met that goal. And then we're hitting into the year of COVID after that, and then the desire for expansion of a lot of these activities really went on pause.
- Q You mentioned that PBIS was moved from one office to another. Were you stating that could be one reason why this goal was not achieved?
  - MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
- You can answer.
  - A It could be. Certainly any time that you move an activity from one division to the other, there's certainly a recalibration of some things.



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1	It could be.
2	Q Has the
3	A I wasn't
4	Q Go ahead.
5	A But I wasn't supervising that at the time,
6	so.
7	Also, I left, I left in 2018 as the
8	manager. So there was a nice gap until the new
9	manager was hired. So you can imagine moving an
10	initiative forward when there's a gap in leadership,
11	that's certainly understandable.
12	Q How long was that gap in leadership?
13	A I don't recall. Several months, at a
14	minimum.
15	Q Has the goal of Tier III implementation
16	been achieved as of today?
17	A It has moving in the right direction,
18	but not wholly. We've got our Tier III training
19	curriculum, which is a huge significant step.
20	Getting the TFI and coaching people to look at the
21	Tiered Fidelity inventory at Tier III, so that has
22	been achieved. But the biggest piece is how to
23	actually train schools and district leadership teams
24	on how to assess Tier III really begins with the
25	training focus and coaching focus.



We've achieved the training curriculum that we felt good with, now that we're in more normalized school operations post-COVID, though. So I think we're moving in the right direction.

Q You said you achieved the training curriculum. Has the training been offered to any schools yet?

A No, not yet. That I'm aware of. I don't think we've done a -- I don't think we've done a -- I don't think we've launched any specific schools that have been exposed to the training.

Q And this is the Tier III training, correct?

A Correct. But we're going to be calling it the advanced tiers, so we can -- schools don't have an appetite for seven to nine days of training from anybody. So we're trying to be more efficient with our trainings and looking at Tier II and Tier III simultaneously, which would be a more efficient way to conduct training.

Q Is it correct that the Tier III training that was recently completed but has not yet been provided includes both Tier III and Tier II implementation?

A It does. It does.



1	Q And when	
2	A Putting them	
3	Q Okay.	
4	A That's okay. If I can interject.	
5	We have a Tier III that can stand by	
6	itself, we have a Tier II that can stand by itself,	
7	but merging the two is what is happening as well.	
8	Q Thank you.	
9	A Yep.	
10	Q And when did the Tier III curriculum get	
11	finalized?	
12	A I think we showcased that to a small	
13	cohort of regional folks to get their feedback, and	
14	I believe we did that maybe November of '22.	
15	Q And is	
16	A Like before the	
17	Q I'm sorry. Go ahead.	
18	A It was right before the holidays.	
19	Q And has the combined more efficient Tier	
20	II and Tier III training been completed?	
21	A It has not.	
22	Q When do you expect that the combined Tier	
23	II and Tier III training will be completed?	
24	A So the behavior, that can be completed	
25	before the summer. But we certainly want to look at	



ways to merge academic considerations within that
training. So we're certainly reviewing the
possibility of adding that as well. Because, again
--

- Q But -- so sorry. Keep going.
- 6 A The goal -- okay.

The goal of MTSS again is not to really define behavior and academics as if they act exclusive of one another. The goal of true MTSS is to have a comprehensive look at the child, their behavior, and oftentimes is linked together and how can be -- how can we do that better.

So we're having to actually do, just like Michigan and Washington, and some other states, is that taking the preexisting training curriculum that has been siloed to behavior circles and academic circles and how do we do this in a united conversation to be more efficient with the way we do business.

Q Who is the team working on the combined Tier II, Tier III behavior and academic training?

A I know that -- the entire team has provided feedback. I know that Sandy DeMuth has taken a lead putting that together. Mimi Gudenrath would certainly have a piece to play.



And I don't know the third individual that's taking lead but I would say almost all the specialists had a hand in looking at it and making some feedback loops. That's accurate.

O What is Sandra DeMuth's role?

A She's a part-time specialist today, funded through the School Climate Transformation grant.

And largely her expertise has been management of the SWIS training and implementation, but because she has a lot of experience with Functional Behavior

Assessments and upper tiers of supports in her career with special education, she's also one of our trainers as well. So she goes and helps actively train schools, district leadership teams, and RESA school climate specialists.

So those are some of the things that she does.

Q And what is Mimi Gudenrath's role?

A She has some of the same. They're both considered national SWIS facilitators, of which there is a small number. So Mimi provides that same level of oversights, in addition to what's called PBIS apps, which is a suite of applications at the University of Oregon. Not only does it house SWIS, but it also houses the uploads of the Tiered



1	Fidelity Inventory, as well as the Self Assessment
2	Survey called the SAS.
3	THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. Slow
4	down. Just slow down, please.
5	A The Self Assessment Survey, which is SAS.
6	Q Are we good for me to continue?
7	A Is that for me? Or the court reporter?
8	MS. JOHNSON: I think everyone.
9	A I'm good.
10	Q The 2020 to 2021 school year, which is
11	shown at the end of this attachment, is 13 to 14
12	years after GaDOE initially created the first PBIS
13	team; is that correct?
14	A Yes, that's correct.
15	Q Why has it taken so long for GaDOE to be
16	able to support schools in their creation of Tier
17	III supports?
18	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
19	You can answer.
20	A Well, the State team at the beginning was
21	only four people. So four individuals only, with
22	the entire State of Georgia, to create an entire
23	change in the way that people look at behavior
24	discipline. A rather large task for four
25	individuals. It would take us probably I could



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speculate how many decades it will take to make that change.

So a lot of it had to do with taking our four individuals and going to scale and like how many more employees do we need, and what are the regional coaches and how can we train them? Because we're trying to build our capacity. Imagine taking .5, that eventually became full-time in all the different regional sites and us having to train individual school requests, us training a cadre of coaching supports that could lead to future capacity building. It's a much taller order than you might think.

It's not, it's not the same as the academics, when people just assume, well, you don't have these skills unless you immediately go remedy those. We're actually trying to change the philosophy as to how you look at behavior.

We're trying to tell and teach an entire

State of Georgia behavior is not accidental and it's
not on purpose, or it's not certainly geared to you.

Behavior does serve a purpose. It can be predicted
and it can be prevented. And discipline

exclusionary practices aren't the first line of
response, but that's a belief system in many states



that's been in place for many, many years, decades and decades.

So if you think about it, what you're trying to do is change an entire way of thinking about preventing problems from happening, because if you look at the entire decade of '80s and '90s, we wanted to suspend our way to peace and prosperity in the classrooms, in schools, and that was not -- that zero tolerance approach was not yielding any fruits at all.

So we came at it and said let's re-think the way that we look at student discipline, re-think the way that we look at behavior, and it's a much tolerate -- more than we ever thought it would take.

Q Can you please control to Page 3, which is the first page of the attachment.

Perfect. Do you see where it says, "70% of Schools Will Score a 4 or 5 on the School Climate Rating by 2020"?

- A I do.
- Q What is the school climate rating?
- A The school climate rating system was something developed by the Department of Education to try to assess climate. No other state had really undertaken the task of how do we know a school has



good climate. One doesn't matter and I think we said yes, it does. Since it does matter, how would we know if a school has good climate.

So the policy division under Dr. Garry
McGiboney started looking at different factors and
said, well, let's consider acceptance data, which is
important. So looked at the Georgia student head
safety survey and students responses on that, about
how they thought about their learning environment.

They weren't the only ones who participated in those surveys. Teachers could. And also parents. And they're all speaking to what they think about the climate, in a number of areas.

So looking at participation rates with those surveys was certainly an indication. Like if no parent is really participating and weighing in on what the climate is, it could be an indicator that the school has a poor climate, otherwise why aren't they putting their full measure of asking parents in the community to speak about the school climate.

The other one would be looking at school attendance. Certainly know that students attending school could be interrupted by illness and things like that, but we also know through research that attendance to school by teachers and staff -- excuse



me -- by teachers and students, if they are all coming to school, they probably would want to come to school because the climate is really positive.

Other factors we'd look at, in-school and out-of-school suspension rates. Does the school have a history of and a pattern of exclusion practices where they remove students quickly and routinely for behaviors. Certainly, especially if they're denying it. But what is the -- what is the climate in the school, is it exclusionary or inclusive.

So we kind of look at a lot of these different factors and try to determine in our best guess do we think this has a good school climate, and they certainly created a star rating system, with a one being the lowest and an indication of really poor climate, five being the higher indication that it has a really positive climate.

We knew and know that PBIS is a framework to assist in improving that climate. And if that's the case, we certainly would love to see -- make a goal that we have for the majority of schools in Georgia, because of our work, that would have four and five school climate rating.

Q You mentioned a number of different



And so if -- so attendance is one of many



24

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course.

Q

1	important factors when assessing a school's school
2	climate?
3	A It is.
4	Q And was the goal of 70 percent of schools
5	achieving a four or five on the school climate
6	rating achieved by 2020?
7	A I think you said why was the goal or did
8	we achieve the goal?
9	Q The question was, was the goal achieved?
10	A COVID happened by 2020, and we suspended
11	the school climate star rating the first year of
12	COVID, and it has been suspended since then.
13	But did we achieve it before the pandemic?
14	I did not bring that data with me, but certainly we
15	could a report can be run for that.
16	Q I'd like to show you what's going to be
17	marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 971 I'm sorry. I
18	believe 972.
19	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-972 was
20	marked for identification.)
21	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
22	Q This is Bates No. GA03425886, and it's an
23	email from you, Mr. Hill, to Garry McGiboney dated
24	February 21st, 2017.
25	MS CHEVRIER. I'll give my colleague a



1	moment to bring it up.
2	MS. LeVERT: Could you confirm the Bates
3	number one more time.
4	MS. CHEVRIER: It's GA03425886.
5	Thank you.
6	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
7	Q Again, Mr. Hill, this is an email from you
8	to Garry McGiboney dated February 21st, 2017,
9	correct?
10	A Correct.
11	Q And there are some people who are copied.
12	Is that correct?
13	A Correct.
14	Q Who is Deborah Gay?
15	A Deborah Gay, she's retired now, but she
16	was the deputy superintendent for Federal Programs,
17	and prior to that she was the director of Special
18	Education.
19	Q And with Deborah Gay, Zelphine Smith-Dixon
20	is also copied. Who is Zelphine Smith-Dixon?
21	A At that time, Zelphine Smith-Dixon I
22	believe was the assistant director for Special
23	Education, but Deborah Deborah Gay could have
24	been promoted to deputy at that time, and then Zel
25	would have been the director But memory escapes me



about when the promotion took place, so it's -- I'm 1 2 not really sure. Do you recognize this email? 3 Q 4 Α Um, it's been a long time. 5 Do you have any reason to believe this 0 6 isn't an authentic printout of an email between you 7 and Mr. -- and Dr. McGiboney? Α No, I do not. 8 Do you see under a. where "the difference" 9 10 is highlighted? 11 Α I do. 12 Do you see where you wrote: "We do not 0 13 have capacity to move beyond Tier I implementation 14 in 50% of LEAs. Research is telling us if we do not 15 help school districts develop their tiers 16 (especially classroom) within 3 years their 17 discipline trends begin to slowly reverse, as 18 teachers have not been helped to change their 19 practices"? 20 Α That's correct. Research is based on Kent 21 McIntosh from the University of Oregon. 22 I'm sorry. Does he have MS. JOHNSON: 23 control? Can we scroll down? 24 MS. CHEVRIER: Yes, he does. 25 MS. JOHNSON: Were you done?



1	MS. CHEVRIER: I'm sorry.
2	MS. JOHNSON: Were you done?
3	MS. CHEVRIER: Sorry, Melanie. Would you
4	repeat yourself?
5	MS. JOHNSON: Were you just reading from
6	the body of the email just now?
7	MS. CHEVRIER: Yes, I was. Under where it
8	says, "The difference," and the difference is
9	highlighted.
10	MS. JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.
11	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
12	Q So, Mr. Hill, whose research is it that
13	says that the research is telling you that if you
14	do not help districts and schools develop their
15	tiers within three years, their discipline trends
16	tend to begin to slowly reverse?
17	A That would be Dr. Kent McIntosh.
18	Q Thank you.
19	A His his research expertise is
20	disproportionality, but also looking at
21	implementation across the states. And we used to
22	say, when we were training in the beginning, it
23	takes three to five years to see change with
24	implementation of as many things in education, but
25	and we certainly were operating under like hey



- 1 | it's going to take you three to five years to see
- 2 long-term change, and that was -- could be
- 3 frustrating to some districts to think it's going to
- 4 take that long to see all these changes take place.
- 5 So we would slow-walk how we introduce the concepts,
- 6 and not to push too hard so that we overwhelm
- 7 | educator's ability to absorb new information and a
- 8 new way of thinking about discipline.

9 But then Kent McIntosh was saying, we've

10 got to figure out a way, because schools, because of

11 | burn-outs, because of teacher turnover and principal

12 turnover, that -- and we certainly experienced that

13 | in Georgia. You train a school, it changed, and

14 | then you see a large-scale turnover, especially in

15 urban centers with principals, and then would be

16 requesting to be retrained.

17 And certainly we were trying to reflect on

18 how in the world do we go to scale quicker and give

19 | them what they're able to absorb, and I think that's

20 | why technical assistance centers are researching

this. But what is the rate of speed to affect

22 | change quickly.

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23 Brandi Simonsen from the University of

24 | Connecticut, she was looking at, well, also don't

25 forget the implementation at the classroom level.



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So putting all the tiers in place sooner than later 1 2 is important, but also teachers need to implement these practices as well. 3

So now you can imagine how much is coming in a school and their ability -- and this is only one big initiative around behavior and climate. Now add all the other things that could be taking place with academic difficulties.

It becomes a daunting task, how much change can a school take and the amount of time that we would love to see it take place in. Sooner than later, of course, is always the answer.

Is there concern within GaDOE about the gap in time between the initial rollout of PBIS in Georgia and the rollout of Tier III training and implementation?

> Object to form. MS. JOHNSON:

You can answer.

- Α That's what that -- I'm not sure of that.
- So you're not --Q
- Concern --21 Α
- 22 Q Sorry.

23 That would be a chief of staff, Mr. Woods, Α 24 what their concerns are. I certainly would speak in my capacity to say that in my capacity, my concern



is how do we -- is how do we roll this out with everything else that we're rolling out and the school's ability to absorb change. Especially after COVID. That's my concern.

Q At the bottom of the first page of this email, you wrote, quote: "To repeat we provide hardly any support to the classroom (despite the need) or in Tiers 2 or 3 (despite the need)."

A That's correct.

Q Is there still a need to provide classroom support?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

You can answer.

A Absolutely. In fact, that's our heavy investment area especially after -- especially after COVID. It's not only just anecdotal, but schools, districts, and their leadership certainly reaching out to us saying please help us with teaching and increasingly inexperienced teaching staff how to implement space practices proactively in the classroom. So please help us install that.

We can certainly -- it's a lot easier to build non-classroom agreement, how you have transition, how students enter the building, how they exit locations, how do you encourage them in



all those non-classroom settings to have that universal agreement and a prevention mindset, but then taking that behavior change to each individual classroom teacher to change their practice could be more positive and proactive in their approaches.

That's a much larger task.

So helping the staff take that on, how to build a faculty, special leadership teams. Capacity to support those teachers in those specific areas certainly takes a more strategic approach, and that is the State developing them, coordinating training curriculum, a coaching model, training RESA school climate specialists to assist us in that way.

There's a lot of teachers in our state, and it begins with at least taking it on. So far we got 250 schools that have kind of did a deep dive into what proactive classrooms should be looking like, how they could support those teachers.

Q So does GaDOE currently provide classroom support?

A We do through this training, but we also do this through our school climate specialists at the RESAs. They also deliver this training.

And there are a number of district coordinators who we think we've built capacity, and



1 like in some of the metro areas, in particular like 2 Cobb County, Forsyth County, to name just a couple,

3 where they're proficient to train on their own

4 | without us having to be there present and to coach

5 them at the training. They can take it and run with

it, so to speak.

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Q How frequently are these trainings provided to schools that are receiving classroom support?

A Well, they're scattered throughout the year based on request. So I can't say that it's -- like in the beginning days, when PBIS first got started, we would only train in the summer, and that would take up a school's limited number of days that they could tackle preplanning. So then after a while we started training and providing them throughout the years.

So I would say certainly the concentration would be the month that there's no formalized testing happening, like Milestones for Georgia. So you probably see a lot of those things in the fall, after school. And you may see some extended in the summer, and some would be in the spring, but not to interfere with testing.

And we've certainly being experimenting



with how do we do this virtually. So we've 1 2 certainly had to adapt to hybrid models of training. To the question of do we have a 3 4 predictable frequency that we offer, I would say the 5 answer is no. Upon request, upon, schedule, upon availability, we try to be as flexible as we can to 6 7 the schools and districts. If the school requests classroom support 8 0 9 for PBIS, how frequently could they receive that 10 support? 11 Α Well, it would be training the school team 12 on how to coach that change, not to the specific 13 teachers. But they could receive that training --14 they would only really want that once a year, 15 because they wouldn't have the capacity for a 16 leadership team away, with a limited number of 17 substitute teachers that we have these days. 18 have that more than a one-day or two-day kind of 19 training event. 20 Is it accurate to say that the support GaDOE provides to classrooms is done in terms of 21 22 training to individuals who then teach the practices 23 to teachers within individual schools? 24 I think it would be more accurate to say Α

that the training certainly would take place to



1	district coordinators, school climate specialists,
2	who in turn would full faculty not the entire
3	faculty, the leadership team. And it's through that
4	leadership team they drive the change at the
5	classroom level.
6	Q How many schools have participated in this
7	type of training model?
8	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
9	You can answer.
10	A By the end of '21-22, 250, but we also
11	know that several schools have participated in
12	training this year. So that number is at the end
13	of this year that number will be higher.
14	Q Other than increasing the number of
15	schools who receive such training, does GaDOE have
16	any concrete plans to expand providing such support?
17	A We certainly do. The demand signals are
18	very heavy in that area.
19	Q What are those plans?
20	A The biggest plan is take the current
21	training and figure out how to merge some of the
22	Tier I academic proactive features that should be in
23	place and how could we merge it into this training

Right now we've got, we've got the MTSS



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so that it's more holistic.

1	team and some of the PBIS members, who are really
2	one team. I only say them differently just for
3	context. But they're actively looking at the
4	current training and how do we fit this in without
5	overburdening districts who say I don't have two
6	more days, I can't attend a two more day training.
7	So we're trying to figure out, you know, a
8	hybrid approach, and how do we deliver not only the
9	behavior pieces but also looking at some of the
10	academic pieces.
11	Q Are the plans to expand this support
12	documented or memorialized anywhere?
13	A I don't think we've put it on a strategic
14	plan update. Right now it's it's mostly an

Even the strategic plan that you -- that we've looked at today, it's going to require us to actually crack that open and adjust that, adding some academic pieces and what that might look like.

outline, goal setting that we have.

You mentioned that the strategic plan we were reviewing earlier was receiving revisions. What are the revisions that it's in the process of receiving?

That hasn't happened yet. We haven't Α opened it and started writing it yet. Right now



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1	what we're doing is forming the team. For example,
2	I have three job vacancies. So we're actually
3	putting the team together.
4	And vou certainly heard me make mention o

And you certainly heard me make mention of One of the things that we're doing is taking a document called the Tiered Fidelity Inventory for academics, that the Department of Education for Virginia has taken from the Michigan project, and that the Michigan project, through Steve Goodman, has developed a TFI for reading and a TFI for mathematics.

Now, I've already said the word "TFI" several times with behavior and this. imagine the school receiving so many TFIs that it would be like I don't care what you're selling, I'm not implementing because I can't take that many fidelity tools.

What Virginia did was try to harmonize them and just look at academics universally.

What we're doing is saying, is that a tool that Georgia might be able to use to help achieve our integration of MTSS with academics and MTSS for behavior.

So that review is taking place right now with our school improvement office, taking a look at



1	the academic TFI that the Virginia Department of
2	Education has developed, and asking if we can make
3	some modifications so we can have harmony.
4	So for the prevention-based team,
5	improvement, to kind of react to you're on a
6	federally identifiable list. Well, it certainly
7	would behoove us to have harmony with that addition
8	in many ways. So that's what we're doing right now.
9	Q Is there still a need to provide support
10	outside of training for Tiers II and III?
11	MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.
12	Object to form. You can answer.
13	A You say is there a need to provide
14	training outside of
15	Q Sorry. Let me repeat.
16	Is there a need to provide support outside
17	of training to schools for Tier II and III?
18	A Absolutely. That support would be in the
19	form of individualized coaching, site visits,
20	talking to leadership teams, helping them to assess
21	themselves.
22	If a school team takes the TFIs and say I
23	think we have all these things in place, an outside
24	coach through the RESA school climate specialist,
25	and in conjunction with the district coordinator



1	maybe	even	а	coach	from	another	school	can	come	in
2	and p	rovide	e t	that a	ssista	ance.				

On the rare occasion where we -- we don't really have a focus capacity to do that. We certainly could coach that. And if we were in individual schools all the time, that would prevent us from doing more strategic things. Certainly that does take place.

Q So GaDOE does currently provide support for Tiers II and III for individual schools?

A Indirectly. There are some schools that we have trained, but it's not our chief focus. Our chief focus is to build capacity, to train district coordinators, and RESA climate specialists. But we have training in schools.

Q Outside of training, does GaDOE provide any support for Tiers II and III currently for individual schools?

A Individual schools? We sometimes model walk-throughs, as we try to model for district coordinators of the effort. But largely that would be at the Tier I, possibly classroom, maybe looking at Tier II systems.

When it comes to Tier III, the support might only be looking at the Tiered Fidelity



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- Q Does GaDOE have any concrete plans to begin providing support other than training regarding Tier III?
- I would say right now the immediate plan is looking at Tier III through training curriculum and some follow-up coaching, help the district look at its system, but not at the school level.
- How does GaDOE set expectations for schools regarding the implementation of PBIS?
- Someone created a network of district Α coordinators of PBIS and the RESA school climate specialists. So we -- this kind of network, they meet frequently, quarterly certainly, and many times monthly, not just email distributions but onsite meetings, especially after COVID. So they will meet in Macon. We'll meet with a RESA school climate specialist. We'll meet then the next day with a school climate specialist and the district coordinator of PBIS, which RESAs -- I mean GNETS typically send a coach. About 50 percent usually participate in the face-to-face meetings.
- But at those meetings we relay expectations about timelines of activities that need to take place, how we can support them, what they're



seeing on the ground, how we can improve their training and coaching approaches.

We're certainly by the spring trying to communicate if there had been any changes in how schools would be recognized for fidelity. We have those conversations in person before the school year ends.

But those things happen that way. It's regular and routine and it's been that way for a number of years.

Q How does GaDOE communicate expectations for schools regarding the implementation of PBIS?

A In the same way. Through that network and meetings. I can repeat it again.

We meet quarterly, oftentimes in person, and then we meet -- we certainly have those meetings, like webinars monthly, and it's a lot of checkups about different levels of implementation, how to improve implementation.

Q Is there an expectation that schools using the PBIS framework will eventually offer all three tiers based on student needs?

A Certainly it's the expectation that they would fully develop their systems of support. I think that's certainly the goal with PBIS, from its



1   outset.
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- Q Does GaDOE share what fidelity measures schools should use to assess the efficacy of their PBIS framework?
  - A We do.
    - Q And what are those fidelity measures?
- A Well, largely -- we've mentioned the TFI.

  The TFI is certainly maybe a cornerstone of looking at what fidelity should be at the early years.

We use the benchmarks of quality that, for instance, South Florida developed, but soon we start to -- when I was program manager, I shifted us from the benchmarks of quality that only assessed Tier I fidelity and shifted to the TFI, because the TFI, at least it started to ask there's one, two and three. For the first time we had a tool, and I thought if we're ever going to really achieve banning to the tiers of support, we needed to have a tool that was more comprehensive than what we were using.

So while we may not have had capacity to train, let's go ahead and start using and introducing a tool that would have capacity. So that's what we used.

And for the first couple of years, a school should be looking at and making sure it has



fidelity at Tier I, but as the years progressed,

III systems, which schools are certainly able to do.

Not only -- when I say tier tool,

remember, it's a small group of educators, probably
six to eight, could be a little bit larger, and
that's a problem solving team that we try to install
at every school.

certainly looking and analyzing the Tier II and Tier

If a school team were to assess itself and say we think our Tier I, II, and II systems are fully in place and functional, we try to balance that with a Self Assessment Survey. Early I called it the SAS, or S-A-S, and that is an inspection survey, where we at least like to see 60 percent of teachers also speak. Well, do you think it's in place? This problem solving team, they think all these pieces are in place, and it's a supportive environment, that's proactive and preventative, but what does the faculty say.

If the faculty in large measure disagrees with what -- the school team, that's when a coach would come in and try to harmonize that and say, here, the school team, problem solving team, thinks these things are in place, faculty disagrees, let's look at where the faculty disagrees and let's make



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those goals. So let's now take that Self Assessment 1 2 Survey again, and now let's take this assessment a little bit more honestly, potentially. 3

So some of those tools help us assess a school's fidelity implementation, and we provide support on how to use the Self Assessment Survey and the Tiered Fidelity Inventory, and if they are assessing all three and they participated in Tier I, II, and classroom level training, certainly we think a school is a little bit higher fidelity implementation than another school.

Q You personally answered this question already when you said you made some changes to what fidelity measures were used, but how -- who determined what fidelity measures are used by schools in Georgia?

Well, the state team would -- the state Α team and the leadership of the state team, we certainly look at how we assess fidelity. simple fidelity is, you could say -- researcher might say the tools, the coaching tools, and set it up placing a score to it above 70. You could say, well, that's enough. But Georgia looked at it and said maybe we should look at some other features.

These are voluntary, but each state, I



would say, is a Petri dish for the PBIS

implementation across the country. Every state can

add some things to it. We certainly consult with

national TAs and say what do you think, what we want

to do is we want to add some pieces to it to make

sure we have fidelity.

Because certainly I could expect and walk in a school and quickly my own self, I could say, this school has it, this school does not have it. This school is implementing all the features, this school may be not the features, but that's quite extensive. So we use these other tools to help us in that regard. But it would be a state team to determine that.

A lot of times the state team would not just arbitrarily say we're changing all these factors. We would certainly create feedback loops with our school climate specialists and a few sample district coordinators and say the way we're assessing it, we've got feedback from our national TAs, we're also asking you all, hey, you're going to be the ones helping us inspect this, what do you think we have here, and then we certainly make a few course corrections.

If we were to make any changes today, we





A I stated at the very beginning, Schoolwide Information System.

Q Are schools that use the PBIS framework required to use SWIS?

A Traditionally, we have maintained that schools implement -- or use SWIS the first year, the implementation year, and primarily that is to gain exposure to the data elements that it provides, so that schools can make informed proactive decisions, because most school information systems don't have the type of proactive data that would lead to good problem solving.

(Discussion ensued off the record.)

Q If a school chooses to no longer use SWIS after it's initial implementation year, how is data tracked by that school?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

You can answer.

A I think you asked if a school chooses not to use it?

Q Correct. Then how do they track data?

A They take -- now, just because they don't have all the data pieces that SWIS has and the drill down capabilities doesn't mean the school information systems aren't close to that. So



- 1 they -- many times they collect very similar data
- 2 | pieces, have some functionality when it comes to
- 3 providing school leaders, two-dimensional graphs,
- 4 trend data, and things like that, but it's probably
- 5 not -- it's not as good as SWIS. So they do the
- 6 best that they can. They just work with what they
- 7 have.
- 8 Q Does GaDOE monitor how schools are
- 9 tracking the data?
- 10 A Well, through the PBIS disciplines, those
- 11 that voluntarily work with us, we certainly monitor
- 12 | the data they submit.
- 13 Q How many schools currently use SWIS?
- A Total at the end of '21, '22, 441 schools
- 15 | in Georgia. Although that may actually be around a
- 16 steady number. So about 441 schools continue to use
- 17 SWIS, and I think, from what I've gathered, 10 GNETS
- 18 | continue to actively use SWIS.
- 19 Q How does GaDOE monitor the implementation
- 20 of PBIS in schools?
- 21 A Well, we have an end of the year -- I know
- 22 | earlier you mentioned EOY, but we have an end of the
- 23 | year process that is basically our fidelity
- 24 | collection process, of which the TFI scores that
- 25 | we've talked about a few times would just be one of



1	those main elements. But we have an online way that
2	we collect the data, so it's more automated, so
3	schools are no longer faxing us things, but they
4	submit it online. And we set the criteria about
5	every two years without changing all the time.
6	Q And does GaDOE require I think you've
7	already answered it, but I'll go into more detail.
8	Does GaDOE require any reporting from
9	schools related to PBIS?
10	A As far as fidelity goes?
11	Q And any other data that schools
12	A Correct. They would submit voluntarily
13	some data elements. Discipline data, fidelity
14	scores and participation rates, with TFI, the Self
15	Assessment Survey.
16	So they would submit those data pieces as
17	well.
18	Q And did you say
19	A And all of
20	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
21	A They're all all schools in Georgia have
22	to submit the discipline data, any time it results
23	in an office referral that would result in an
24	in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension.

So they are already doing that. We have the PBIS



schools kind of put something in this database 1 2 system voluntarily before the superintendent signs 3 off with the district so they can assess fidelity. 4 How many schools do submit that data 5 that's voluntary to the PBIS team? 6 Well, so that the official list that I Α 7 mentioned, the 1,419 number at the end of '21-22, those would be the -- there could be schools that 8 9 would say they're doing PBIS, and they may. may be implementing. But the official count would 10 11 be what is submitted to us as official participants. 12 So at the end of '21-22, it's 1,419. But, 13 again, we think that number is going to be over 14 1,500 by the end of this year. 15 In addition to exclusionary discipline, 16 what other factors or data are those schools asked 17 to voluntarily submit to PBIS? 18 Again, they're submitting -- the Tiered А 19 Fidelity Inventory, the times when they took the --20 when they took that assessment, which is twice a 21 year, in the fall and the spring typically; when 22 they took the Self Assessment Survey and balanced

those scores; potentially dates when they've taken

walk-throughs. And at this point it's like three

pages of little things that they're submitting, that



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certainly are available on the web page. And we can 1 2 submit a hard copy to you as well. But certainly participated in the training 3 4 that we have sponsored with our curriculum. 5 not have been the state team to deliver it, but as long as it's the training we helped facilitate. 6 7 There's also some -- I'm feeling I might be speaking too fast. 8 9 Am I good? 10 THE COURT REPORTER: Okay. 11 Α There's also --12 Thanks. THE WITNESS: That will go to 13 reflect the court reporter. I want to make 14 sure I'm being cautious of that. 15 Α There's also some outcome data looking at 16 the percentages of students that we would say are 17 Tier I with office referrals, and we'd love to 18 see -- when they submit those office referrals, we 19 plug them into a calculation with the number of 20 students that are enrolled so we can kind of look at 21 that triangle, that you may be familiar with, how 22 many students in fact are at Tier I, in fact how 23 many students might be in Tier II and Tier III. 24 But in particular, we want to see in 25 high-fidelity implementation 80 percent or higher of



students that receive no referrals or maybe at most one. One behavior accident, so to speak. And those are the kind of data pieces we're looking at.

If you want to be considered a distinguished PBIS school, someone who has participated in Tier I, Tier I classroom, Tier II, and is also looking at all elements of the, of the TFI, as long as they have no zero corporal punishment incidents, which PBIS would certainly not be in support, even though it's a legal practice. To be a distinguished school, we would, we would certainly look at that not being an idealized form of punishment. And certainly it's not on a consistently dangerous list.

Q How is the data transmitted to GaDOE through schools?

A With a Jotform that would be contained inside the SLDS, student -- State Longitudinal Data System. The district coordinator would kind of go through there and submit the data and help us calculate some of those pieces.

Q Do regional GNETS programs have the same GaDOE PBIS reporting requirements as general education schools?

A They do, but certainly we -- we certainly



1 take considerations, but, you know, but, in general,
2 yes.

Q And do regional GNETS programs submit their EOY data through the same portal as general education schools?

A Because they are a program, they won't have access to the SLDS. So they will submit -- to my knowledge, I think the way that we're doing that is through the Jotform that the district coordinator would send to their state contact. We take our state staff and slide them across the -- regionally across the State. So it's my understanding that the GNETS in that particular region would send it to their state contact.

Q Are regional GNETS programs required to provide any additional metrics that general education schools do not need to provide?

A It is not my understanding that we do that today, but I know that when I was a program manager, we certainly looked at trying to come up with something that looked a little different maybe. Not a new process, but right now what we have in place is for all the schools and programs.

Q It sounds like you discussed having different data requests in place. Were those



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	different	data	requests	ever	implemented?
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- Well, again, when a school -- most of it Α was just definitions. If the school -- what a school calls an office discipline referral GNETS may not call an office discipline referral. A lot of it was just walking through the definitions and how those definitions might apply just a little bit different than a GNETS environment.
  - How is PBIS data assessed by GaDOE?
- Α Well, again, we have some criteria that is available online, but kind of look at defining what we would see is installing PBIS school, one that's emerging, one that's operationalized, the components. And one that's moving in distinguished areas.
- Are regional GNETS programs held to the same standards when evaluated for the categorization you just described, emerging, installing, operational, and distinguished?
  - Α They are.
- And does GaDOE publicize which schools have achieved what category level?
- We do. We put that on the web page, where the PBIS page at GaDOE put that published list of schools and programs.



1	Q I'd like to show what is being marked as
2	Plaintiff's Exhibit 973. This is Bates No.
3	GA03429605.
4	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-973 was
5	marked for identification.)
6	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
7	Q It is an email from December 5th, 2017.
8	Can you confirm, Mr. Hill, this is an
9	email from Sandra DeMuth to Vickie Cleveland and
10	Nakeba Rahming, and that you and others were copied
11	on the response from Nakeba Rahming?
12	A I can confirm that.
13	Q Do you recognize this email?
14	A A long time ago but
15	Q You have control over it if you want to
16	scroll through.
17	And just to confirm, you do recognize this
18	email?
19	A I don't remember the email, but I'm sure
20	that it occurred. I'm seeing that I'm cc'ed on it.
21	Q Who is Vickie Cleveland?
22	A Vickie Cleveland is in the Special
23	Education Division under the office of Federal
24	Programs, and I believe that she is now the liaison
25	person for GNETS. I could be correct. I think



that's what I understand.
Q And who is Nakeba Rahming?
A She's no longer with the agency, but at
the time she was the deputy superintendent. But
before she was deputy superintendent, she was the
agency's point person for GNETS.
Q Do you see where Sandra wrote: "For the
schools they have to be at a minimum percent to meet
the emerging, operational or distinguished
standards. For GNETS, they can certainly submit the
percent at Tier I but not at the same criteria for
schools, which would not be equitable. However,
maybe we could ask them to submit the percent of
students who transition to LRE, whether that's
partial or full day"?
A Was that I don't know if that's a
question. I did see the sentence, though.
Q You do see where that where Sandra
wrote that?
A I do.
Q When Sandra wrote percent at Tier I, is
that the percentage of students in a school who
received Tier I services?
MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.



You can answer.

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Looking at the students that -- who are able to stay in what would be a classroom environment at Tier I. Again, for a lot of us, we're asking -- this is a nice conversation, how we were talking about how do we assess fidelity in this unique environment. So is an office discipline referral, an ODR, is that the same at a school versus GNETS? what's a fair way to assess fidelity? And I think it's part of a conversation. How do we know that these environments -- a little bit different, even more so than an alternative school. Is it fair to say that Sandra was Q proposing that the regional GNETS program's PBIS evaluation look at whether students were transitioning out of GNETS and into a less restrictive environment?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

You can answer.

A Correct.

Q Was that evaluation measure ever implemented?

A I don't recall.

Q And is it currently?

A I --



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	1	Q	I'm	sorry.	Go	ahead.
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- A I felt like that -- it was the year before I transitioned, but I felt like we were putting in a recommendation that I thought we put in place. I just don't recall.
- Q And is that evaluation measure currently in place?
- 8 A It is not. That was changed.
- But, again, all the end of the year

  criteria for fidelity, it typically gets tweaked -
  it used to get tweaked every year, and I

  implemented, which has remained, whatever decisions

  are made on how you're going to calculate this, do
- 14 | it in two-year increments to not cause too much
- 15 change, so there's at least some amount of
- 16 predictability, because you can tweak these things
- 17 to death, and that's certainly -- we wanted to avoid
- 18 | that, constantly changing what's expected.
- 19 Q Does GaDOE use the data you receive from 20 schools to determine areas of need for future 21 training?
- A We do. We work in conjunction with the school climate specialist and district coordinator, which we kind of call like a trio relationship.
  - Hey, what do you think your needs are and what kind



of menu support can you provide for it.

Not only in an in-person environment but now looking at hybrid training environments as well.

Q Does GaDOE use the data received from schools for any other purposes?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

You can answer.

A Outside of me, I'm not sure. School improvement may look at the data to assess if they need -- if they are identifiable lists. I know the data that I have, what we have and how we used our parts in our office.

Q Outside the Tier I, Tier II and Tier III trainings that we discussed earlier, does GaDOE provide training to school districts about PBIS?

A Well, certainly we have what we'd call booster trainings. That is a school could have participated in a two- to three-day live training event. And over the years, where there's been some kind of faculty attrition, we may go in there and --certainly if there's a new principal. We wouldn't force a school in only three to four years to take -- you know, to participate in a full measure of the training. We would go through and use the TFI and say, well, how about we develop booster

training and let's kind of reinstall or revisit some
of the pieces that didn't take, that didn't take
hold.

So I would say booster training would be one example.

We could also use a problem solving kind of a protocol that would be outside the standard training. So what are other areas that could be causing your school not to be successful, and maybe it's just focusing what the deep dive on, on attendance may be, or maybe even -- maybe looking at a particular incident so we can fine-tune some pieces that are all attached to this, if that makes some sense.

Q Who provides these trainings?

A The State would provide some. The school climate specialist could provide some as well, sometimes in conjunction. And then the appointed district coordinator of these efforts could do the same.

Q And who provides the trainings for individual schools?

A Well, it could be a combination of all of us. It just depends. We would rather they train the RESA -- the regional RESA school climate



specialist and coordinators to build capacity, but
if there's turnover in those other pieces, the State
sometimes comes in and models the training and
actually conducts the training themselves.

- Q And what is the name of the GaDOE office that is currently responsible for PBIS?
  - A Office of Whole Child Supports.
- Q And I believe you stated earlier that this office has not always been responsible for PBIS. Is that correct?
- A This office is relatively new. Prior to PBIS being the Office of Whole Child, it was in the Office of Teaching and Learning, and it was placed under me when I was the director of Curriculum Instruction.

Prior to that, it was in the Office of School Safety and Climate, and prior to that it was in the Office of Special Education. Which is not too uncommon across the country for PBIS to be housed in a variety of places.

- Q When did these changes occur?
- A From Special Education to a new Office of School Climate and Safety, I think that was around 2019. And -- but I don't know the exact month and date because I moved over to Teaching and Learning



1 and Curriculum Instruction.

The move to Teaching and Learning as the Office of School Safety and Climate was disassembled, it seemed like it happened right at COVID, or right before or right during. I'd have to look at -- I'm not sure of the exact month that we transitioned.

The move to the Office of Whole Child happened with my move, around October 15th of 2022.

Q What prompted these changes?

A I think mainly the fact that I had been a part of PBIS from its inception. So me having the most experience leading the work and having worked with a lot of the national -- national folks, it probably makes a lot of sense for PBIS to travel with me.

But also have the other task of taking the MTSS academic framework, which has a similar mentality and prevention base things, and what the hearing out in the field is that we have two frameworks doing similar work, talking similar languages, coming out of two offices. Schools are setting up two to three different teams, looking at some of the training data stats. Let's go about the business of merging them. And I think the decision



was, well, we think Justin can merge those two. And certainly we're trying it.

I think those are the reasons that it was prompted.

Q Within the office of Whole Child Supports, what is the internal team that focuses on PBIS?

A Well, when it first came over, it was just the PBIS team. If I could just kind of restate, my job is to take the PBIS team and all the functions of PBIS that will not go away, and merge the other -- again, PBIS is an MTSS framework. PBIS is a multitiered system. It's just exclusively focused on behavior to improve climate.

MTSS in the State of Georgia and other states typically has had use of academic focus, but they approach problems prevention-wise and response-wise the same way. MTSS should be together looking at academics and behaviors simultaneously.

PBIS is not going away and the core preceps of PBIS is not going away. My task is to do what Michigan has done, what Wisconsin is trying to do, what Washington has done and Florida has done and actually create a true MTSS system where behavior is balanced with prevention systems for academics.



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So it's not going away, but when I say -
when we call the new team is essentially called
the Georgia Tiered System of Support. And what
areas do we support? Academics and behavior.
Q How many people in the Office of Whole

- Child supports work in some capacity on PBIS?

  A I've got three openings that we're hiring
- A I've got three openings that we're hiring

  8 for. So add that to nine full-time, three

  9 part-timers.
- 10 Q And what are the roles of the nine 11 full-timers?
- A Well, one's a senior program manager. So that person is helping to organize and manage the work.
  - Then I have one other manager for digital resources, who is helping to build more classroom digital resources for teachers, something we learned during COVID that was an expressed need.
  - But the rest of the staff, I would consider them the regionally assigned in the State, to support capacity building at the RESA home districts.
  - Q And what are the credentials for these different employees in the different roles?
    - A Most, if not all, have Master's degrees.



1	Many of them had experience either implementing PBIS
2	at the building level, supervising PBIS at the
3	district level. We have a few former GNETS
4	directors, and then ones from the Michigan MTSS
5	project.
6	So everybody has some stake or experience
7	level with implementation, from the State, region,
8	or school level. They bring all those skills
9	together to help us build a team.
10	Q What are the salaries for these employees
11	in their different roles?
12	A I can't give you a specific breakdown of
13	everyone's salary, but I would say the specialist
14	level, an average would be mid to upper eighties.
15	Whereas managers would typically be from lower
16	nineties to the lower-upper nineties.
17	Part-timers
18	Q Are these provided by GaDOE
19	THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, Claire.
20	(Discussion ensued off the record.)
21	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
22	Q The transcript ends, Mr. Hill, with you
23	saying that managers would typically be in the lower
24	nineties to upper nineties for salaries.

Could you continue with what you provided



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- previously as far as the different roles and what 1 2 salaries they earn?
  - Α The part-time staff, mid to low Sure. And the specialist would be at the mid to high eighties. And the managers would be in the low nineties to upper nineties.
    - Thank you. And my next question was, what 0 funding is provided by GaDOE that is used to support PBIS?
  - We have -- most of our part-timers are being funded through a school climate transformation grant, which expires 30 September this year. lion's share of the funding streams comes from IDEA discretionary dollars, but we also have from the Georgia General Assembly and the Governor's budget funding for two full-time staff with state dollars. So we have two state dollars, we have one grant, and the rest IDEA.
  - Let's go each line item for the GaDOE school climate team or what you have stated is the Georgia tiered system of support team as it relates to PBIS.
- 23 What is the total amount of money for 24 staff in this team?
  - Α I could use the calculator and just --



1	real quick.
2	Q Well, if you want, we can go staff member
3	by staff member, so that we don't have to do math on
4	the fly.
5	A We can do that.
6	The first staff member is Jeannie Morris.
7	She's the senior program manager. Her base salary
8	is \$98,000.
9	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: I was checking to see
10	if it was possible to take the document down if
11	we're not using it at this time.
12	MS. CHEVRIER: Yes. Thank you. We can
13	remove the document.
14	Q Go ahead, Mr. Hill.
15	A Did you hear the first did you hear the
16	first staff member, by chance? Jeannie Morris?
17	Q Yes. It's in the reporting.
18	Go ahead.
19	A Dr. Susan Barrow, education program
20	specialist for PBIS, \$89,621.
21	Anthony Feldmann, education program
22	specialist, \$90,729.
23	Benjamin Moore, education program
24	specialist, \$87,619.
25	Amber Phillips, education program



1	specialist, \$80,000 even.
2	Shannon Weist, W-E-I-S-T, \$87,962.
3	Brandy Woolridge, Brandy with a yes,
4	\$86,600.
5	Amy Yacobacci, last name is
6	Y-A-C-O-B-A-C-C-I, salary at 80,000.
7	Amie Cumming, Amy with I-E, program
8	manager for School Climate Transformation Grant and
9	our digital resource team. She's at 90,000 even.
10	Mimi Gudenrath or Miriam, pardon me,
11	Gudenrath. Miriam, M-I-R-I-A-M, Gudenrath,
12	G-U-D-E-N-R-A-T-H, part-time staff member of 43,503.
13	Sandra DeMuth, D-E-M-U-T-H, last name.
14	Her salary is at 42,280.
15	Then our newest hire, Steven Rufe,
16	R-U-F-E, 40,000 even.
17	And we have three vacancies of which we're
18	hiring for.
19	Q I'm sorry, I didn't want to interrupt you.
20	A Sorry. Yes, that's it.
21	Q And what other items are on the line item
22	budget for the GaDOE Georgia tier system of support
23	team? Is there money for training specifically
24	earmarked?
25	A Yeah. We have typically around a \$2



1	million IDEA, kind of overarching dollars, which we
2	carve out the salaries.
3	Since we've had the School Climate
4	Transformation Grant for five years, we certainly
5	leaned on the climate grant to help conduct
6	trainings, travel expenses to said trainings. Even
7	funding the equipment to be used in those trainings
8	as well.
9	Q And so I know you said you typically have
10	\$2 million in IDEA funds. What is the total amount
11	of money that is used for training, for PBIS
12	training?
13	A Well, I have to look at the percentage
14	that we peeled off for training. Again, we probably
15	use more IDEA dollars that we didn't have in the
16	School Climate Transformation Grant, so we haven't
17	had to lean on some of those dollars. I don't have
18	the exact figures of how much we spent on training,
19	salaries excuse me, trainings, which would be
20	expressed as travel expenses typically. Because we
21	don't charge people to participate in training.
22	What we do is we provide free training; we just pay
23	for our travel expenses.
24	We might rent a conference center for
25	training potentially.



1	I don't have those figures with me.
2	Q Is it the travel expenses and
3	transportation that you say you don't have those
4	figures with you?
5	A I do not.
6	Q What other items are funded under the
7	PBIS, for PBIS and GaDOE?
8	A Other than salaries, travel expenses for
9	training, and possibly equipment, laptops, and the
10	things that would be associated with that.
11	We could fund a serious of books
12	internally for a book study, but that shouldn't be
13	where that's it in the nutshell.
14	Q And you don't have the numbers for those
15	expenses?
16	A No, but they are easily retrieved.
17	Q Are there any other school climate
18	programs that are in use in Georgia schools separate
19	from PBIS?
20	A I could be picky, but PBIS is not
21	necessarily a program. It's the framework. But I
22	know what you mean by that.
23	I'm not aware. It could be CASEL's

framework could be in place, but I don't know. We

don't support that framework and I'm even sure how



24

1	many schools use it.
2	Q Is that CASEL, spelled like
3	A C A
4	Q C-A-S
5	A C-A-S-E-L, the Consortium for the
6	Association for Social/Emotional Learning.
7	I don't again, they're a consortium. I
8	don't know we don't mandate it. We don't track
9	it.
10	Q To your knowledge, are there any other
11	frameworks or programs that are used to support
12	school climate other than PBIS and C-A-S-E-L?
13	A Not in I'm aware of.
14	Q You said that GaDOE does not support
15	C-A-S-E-L. Does GaDOE support any other school
16	climate efforts outside of PBIS?
17	A I mean school climate in a broad sense
18	would certainly support the use of student health
19	safety survey we've had in existence for a number of
20	years. But the district would have the data to look
21	at different elements of school climate and Star
22	Climate Rating. But as far as officially having a
23	vehicle to improve climate, that's comprehensive
24	now.
25	O So is it fair to say GaDOE has not



1	endorsed the use of any alternative school climate
2	programs?
3	A I'm unaware of a school climate program.
4	Q Has the
5	A PBIS is a I'm sorry.
6	Q Sorry. Go ahead.
7	A No.
8	Q Has the efficacy of school climate tracked
9	for schools who do not implement the PBIS framework?
10	A Well, we certainly use the we certainly
11	look at the school climate rating to assess if the
12	school has what their climate is based on on that
13	rating scale. So we look at PBIS schools versus
14	non-PBIS schools. Certainly looked at that in the
15	past.
16	Q When was the
17	MS. GARDNER: Go ahead.
18	MS. JOHNSON: Can we go off the record
19	real quick so I can switch audios? My phone
20	battery is not going to last much longer.
21	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We'll go off the record
22	now at 6:42 p.m.
23	(A recess was taken.)
24	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are back on the
25	record, 6:43 p.m.



1	Proceed.
2	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
3	Q Mr. Hill, when was the Office of Whole
4	Child Supports created?
5	A I don't remember the exact month and date,
6	month and year. It started with just one
7	individual, Ashley Harris, and I think it took place
8	before COVID. So I do not know.
9	Q Can you ballpark it? Was it five years?
10	10 years?
11	A Oh, yeah, yeah. It was within yes. I
12	can do that.
13	It was in the last at least 2020 maybe.
14	Maybe 2020.
15	Q Thank you. Why was it created?
16	A I believe that the Office of Whole Child
17	Supports was initially really created, and it's
18	still part of kind of the mantra, and that is
19	develop an office whose mission was exclusively
20	designed to look at nonacademic barriers to students
21	achieving success.
22	So, for example, are students not
23	achieving success because there's a lack of access
24	to a doctor that might be 30 miles away? So could
25	it be that we could help a school put a school-based



1	health center onsite with the school so that kids
2	could just go to the doctor right there instead of
3	having to wait weeks and travel 30 miles to see a
4	doctor. So that could be a barrier to a student
5	achieving success.
6	So that would be a function that was
7	developed within this office that's reality. That's
8	just that's just one example.
9	Q I'd like to show you what's being marked
10	as Plaintiff's Exhibit 974, and this is a screen
11	capture of the Office of Whole Child Supports, GaDOE
12	website.
13	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-974 was
14	marked for identification.)
15	MS. CHEVRIER: My colleague is going to
16	pull that up.
17	BY MS. CHEVRIER:
18	Q Do you recognize this website?
19	A I do.
20	Q Do you see where it says "the divisions
21	located within" sorry. You do have access to
22	scroll within this document.
23	Do you see where it says: "The divisions
24	located within the Office of Whole Child Supports
25	include"?



1	A I mean on this first paragraph right here?
2	Q Yeah.
3	A Yes.
4	Q Do you see where it says that the first
5	division listed is Georgia Center for School Safety?
6	A I do.
7	Q What is its focus?
8	A This is a, a office that's really
9	brand-new. We only have one person in it, and we're
10	hiring for a manager currently.
11	Typically, what this this office team
12	will focus on is for the most part be a liaison with
13	what we call GEMA, which is like FEMA, but just at
14	the State level. So Georgia Emergency Management
15	Homeland Security Agency. And we just try to have a
16	coordinated relationship so that assessing school
17	safety plans is not something that the Georgia
18	Department of Education does, that's something that
19	GEMA does, and that falls with that their authority.
20	However, GEMA and I just had a meeting
21	with GEMA not too long ago. What GEMA likes to have
22	is like what is the department's position on certain
23	things and how we communicate together on a number
24	of fronts.

But, by and large, also taking grants that



would come down from the Federal Government, maybe 1 2 even from The Governor's Office, that could help schools shore up their security features. 3 4 So this liaison office would really help take things like that on. 5 And the next division listed is Mental 6 0 7 Health and Wellbeing, correct? I'm sorry. Integrated Wellness. Is that correct? 8 9 Α Correct. 10 What is its focus? 0 11 Α Well, if you look at my previous example 12 that I've talked about, School-Based Health Centers, 13 that certainly -- the third bullet there, but if you 14 look at School Nurse Exchange. Again, its main 15 focus is are there wellness factors in the health 16 domain that are causing schools and students not to 17 be successful, and this focus is to try to help 18 identify those proactively so that they would 19 achieve success. 20 So, for example, the school nurse 21 representative, we never had a school nurse 22 representative. That person is working to make sure

that our Student Information Systems, that they no

longer have pen and pencil of recordkeeping for

school nursing logs, to make sure it's more



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1	automated so we get a good sense of students that
2	are requesting support, and also that the school
3	nurses that exist out in the field have a voice to
4	help enhance their integration efforts, their
5	professional learning, and things like that.
6	Q The next division stated is Mental Health
7	and Wellbeing correct?
8	A Correct.
9	Q What is its focus?
10	A Well, the mental health and wellbeing
11	aspect, so we have several grants. One of them is
12	Project AWARE, which is a SAMHSA grant. The others
13	would be kind of looking at mental health, awareness
14	training. Its big focus is to help build capacity,
15	build awareness of mental health concerns and
16	challenges across the State, with school
17	professionals, district district folks.
18	If the training many times this could
19	involve a partnership, since we mentioned acronyms,
20	DBHDD. It could be looking at partnerships with how

we deliver something, for example, called Sources of Strength, which is kind of a peer-led resiliency focus on -- it's an upstream prevention on how to identify the risk factors among youth and how to be resilient in the face of problems.



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It's just looking at a lot of different factors that would interfere with students being successful. In some cases it's access to healthcare and health pieces. The other could be some mental health concerns and how could we recognize those pieces, as well as some of the other ones listed there.

O The next division listed is Multi-Tiered

- 9 Supports. Is that correct?
- 10 A Correct.

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- 11 Q And what is its focus?
- 12 A That is the focus on most of our
  13 conversation today. That is the MTSS academic team
  14 and the PBIS behavior team, and those are the
  15 activities that exist and that's what we're trying
  16 to merge as we speak.
- 17 Q The next division is listed is School 18 Climate, correct?
- 19 A Correct.
- Q What is its focus?
  - A Well, school climate is that destination; we want schools to have a school climate. So we define it, and when we mention school climate, you know, what are the components of school climate, how do we assess and look at it. Really, the



Multi-Tiered	Suppo	orts bulle	et a	above t	hat	would	
certainly be	the :	framework	in	which	to	address	most
of it.							

- Q We've gotten to my next question. Are the Multi-Tiered Supports division and the School Climate division separate, or how do they overlap?
- A Think of it, think of it as three braids:

  Is we're looking at school climate, behavior, and

  academics. The three braids all united and twisted

  together.
- The web page is not great because we're meeting on Wednesday to redo our webpage so it's a little clearer. I inherited a webpage, and Wednesday it's an all-day whiteboard session to make it clearer.
- Q What in addition to PBIS does the School Climate Team focus on?
- A The School Climate Team would -- could focus on integrating the other pieces that were mentioned above. It's multi-tiered kind of team is really the conduit for all the other pieces of Whole Child.
- So if every school team has a prevention base team at the school, there's more factors to look at other than office discipline referrals. So



1	we certainly want to see that school-based team
2	being a great liaison to say what are the other
3	factors that are causing students to not be
4	successful, and could, through this tiered support
5	structure, could we look at social workers, could we
6	look at student-based health centers, could we look
7	at mental health awareness, how do we grow and
8	expand the things that we're looking at. It's not
9	overwhelming but it becomes organic.
10	Q What is the reporting structure for the
11	School Climate Team?
12	A The School Climate Team is really now the

A The School Climate Team is really now the Tiered Supports Team, but it's -- for our conversation today, you could just say they report to Jeannie Morris, and Jeannie Morris reports to me.

Q Is it accurate to say that Jeannie Morris' current title was previously the PBIS program manager?

A That's correct. Well, I would say -- hold on.

I would say she's a school climate official in the books, school climate manager, but for the sake of this, if it's easier to understand, she's the PBIS manager. That's fine, too. But she was the school climate program manager, of which



PBIS was the largest focus area.

- Q And with the name change, was this position restructured at all?
- A No. I was just trying to speak to the reality. Again, school climate is the destination, and PBIS is the vehicle to get to the destination.

  But it didn't change the nature of the work.
  - Q Who made the decision to remove PBIS from the position title?
  - think we all kind of talked about what it could be referred to. It was the PBIS program manager position when it was under the School Safety And climate. When it was moved under the Office of Teaching and Learning with Dr. Caitlin Dooley as the deputy superintendent, I know that she and I talked about it. She may have had her own conversations with the chief of staff, but we certainly looked at what's a more accurate way and a broad-based way to call the manager, because people get hung up on an acronym, well, what's PBIS manager? Well, they seem to have less issues if you say the school climate manager. They seem to kind of intrinsically have an understanding of what it means.
    - Q Is it fair to say that there was a shift



1 away from specifically mentioning PBIS in division
2 or title names?

A There was a -- I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that when I say PBIS to the average citizen, the answer is, now, what's that again? But if I say this is school climate manager, oh, I think I understand what that means.

- Q If you continue to scroll down on the document, please, is it correct that the next division listed is School Safety?
- 11 A I see that.

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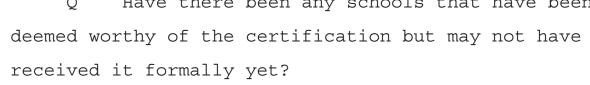
- 12 O And what is its focus?
- A Well, the School Safety should really be back up top where it also says School Safety. So it's the same focus.
  - Q So the School Safety listed here is the same focus as the Georgia Center for Safety -- for School Safety that's listed above?
  - A Yeah. Again, it's looking at all the things that would cause the school to be unsafe, and that's part of Wednesday's activities, is to take the website and make it easier to access and to understand and that it logically flows a little better.
    - Q Do you see below where it says "Additional



1	Whole Child Support Activities"?
2	A I do.
3	Q Do you see where it says "Whole Child
4	Model School Certification (coming soon) "?
5	A I do.
6	Q What is the Whole Child Model School
7	Certification?
8	A The Whole Child Model School Certification
9	is looking at a way to look at the tenets of Whole
10	Child education, to make sure that it's kind of
11	where the research field is is, is looking at not
12	just not just behavior and not just academics,
13	but looking at the whole child, which would include
14	even the mental health pieces, even the health areas
15	that we talked about, and then could we create a
16	certification that is happening nationally that
17	could say, this school has put all the pieces
18	together, they have the health focus, students that
19	are just not in math, English language, Arts
20	Science, Social Studies, but also an arts education,
21	that they provide a whole focus on the child, and at
22	the same location.
23	So it's much more comprehensive way to
24	look at it, but certification is not that easy. So
25	we have three districts participating in the



1	process, Clarke County schools, which we have a
2	couple of schools there, one or two in Cobb County,
3	and then a couple in Forsyth County, Georgia, that
4	are participating with some of that.
5	Q And when will the Whole Child Model School
6	Certification go into effect?
7	A I just think we need to update the web
8	page, but it's offered through an outside group that
9	helps assess fidelity. Again, it's one of the
10	Wednesday's activities are determining the high
11	propensity to be linked. So
12	Q Have any sorry.
13	A Hopefully we'll have that in the next
14	couple of months.
15	Q Have any schools been awarded the Whole
16	Child Model School Certification yet?
17	A I think so. But I'd have to I'd have
18	to verify that they received an official
19	certification.
20	Q Have there been any schools that have been
21	deemed worthy of the certification but may not have



I've heard there are a couple that I should visit, but it's a small list, not a large list. Like I could fit them on my hand.



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1	Q Thank you. Do you see where it says
2	"Wraparound Support Services (Coming soon)"?
3	A I do.
4	Q What Wraparound Support Services is this
5	referring?
6	A Through the funding stream that has been
7	provided to the Office of School and District
8	Effectiveness, which many states would call their
9	School Improvement Division.
10	They just set aside funding for .5 FTE at
11	the RESAs. So each of the 16 RESAs have .5 FTE.
12	That part-time employee, who at some times
13	is the school climate specialist on the other half
14	of their day, their job is to participate in helping
15	federally identifiable schools on the needs
16	improvement list, look at the nonacademic factors
17	that could be contributing to a school not getting
18	on those lists, not succeeding.
19	So we have a staff member whose job is to
20	provide monthly trainings to these half-time
21	employees, on how they could better work with the
22	school improvement process to help schools succeed,
23	because prior to that most of these school

improvement processes, in most states, have almost

an exclusively academics focus, whereas they're



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looking at, well, maybe the academics focus should be broadened, and they help provide that broadening.

Q When will the Wraparound Support Services go into effect?

A It is in effect. Why it says coming soon is something I'll remedy sooner than later.

Q Does the Office of Whole Child Supports ever coordinate with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

You can answer.

A We do.

Q In what ways?

A To give you a very tangible example, previously I mentioned something called Sources of Strength, an upstream prevention program. And the DBHDD provides the training but the DOE also has some trainings. So one of the things that we do is once the school district wants the training, they're likely to reach out to us versus DBHDD, but we have limited capacity. But they have some capacity, but together I think we have more capacity than separate.

So what we've done is started to work together to coordinate who needs training, and how



do we divvy up that help so that we can give all the 1 2 schools the proactive help that they can use. How frequently would you say that the 3 Q 4 Office of Whole Child Supports coordinates with DBHDD? 5 I would say since -- I don't know I'd see А 6 7 that's always been quarterly, but here recently it is at least quarterly, especially since -- not that 8 9 COVID has gone away, but we're more or less on the 10 right side of it, that I would say it's become a little more routine, and I've participated in at 11 12 least one of those discussions. 13 With whom from DBHDD does the Office of 14 Whole Child Supports coordinate? 15 А Mostly through Dante McKay. I believe his official title is director. I don't have his -- the 16 17 rest of his title. I'd have to look it up.

Q Does the coordination with DBHDD ever concern the GNETS program?

MS. JOHNSON: Object to form.

A Not to my knowledge.

Q Mr. Hill, at the beginning of our discussion today you said you had a couple of memos and other documents that you brought with you today. Is that correct?



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1	A Sure. I did.
2	Q Can you read the title of the different
3	memos that you have with you today?
4	A One is the salary memo, which Stacey has.
5	It doesn't have a title, just salary memo,
6	but it has all the things that I read off.
7	MS. CHEVRIER: I'd like the salary memo
8	to that we will mark it as Plaintiff's
9	Exhibit 975.
10	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-975 was
11	marked for identification.)
12	A The other one doesn't have a specific
13	title but it certainly has the PBIS schools that
14	have been trained. You asked a series of questions
15	about how many schools have been trained, Tier I,
16	Tier II, and in classroom, and then you asked about
17	SWIS. So I put all of that on one memo.
18	MS. CHEVRIER: And we will plan to mark
19	that as Plaintiff's Exhibit 976.
20	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-976 was
21	marked for identification.)
22	MS. JOHNSON: I need to send them to you
23	so we can mark them.
24	MR. HOLKINS: Excellent. Thank you.
25	BY MS. CHEVRIER:



1	Q And other than those two memos, is there
2	anything else you brought with you today, Mr. Hill?
3	A One more. It's called the it's short,
4	the PBIS levels of school recognition for the
5	2022-2023 school year.
6	MS. CHEVRIER: And we will plan to mark
7	that as Plaintiff's Exhibit 9 sorry. That's
8	977. Thank you.
9	(WHEREUPON, Plaintiff's Exhibit-977 was
10	marked for identification.)
11	A I can send it to you again.
12	Q And were there any other documents other
13	than those three you brought with you today?
14	A No.
15	MS. JOHNSON: Two of them I can send to
16	you right now and we just have to locate where
17	the third one is but we'll get that to you,
18	too.
19	MS. CHEVRIER: Excellent. Thank you so
20	much.
21	I ask that we get it as soon as possible
22	so we're able to submit it with the other
23	exhibits for the court reporter.
24	MS. JOHNSON: We're going to send that one
25	out to you.



1	Do you want to go off the record for like
2	two minutes while we do this, or do you want to
3	it's up to you.
4	MS. CHEVRIER: I think those are all the
5	questions we have today, so I think we can go
6	ahead and end at our end.
7	MS. JOHNSON: Okay. I don't have I
8	questions either. I just want to be sure that
9	these come through before we, before we go off
10	the record, just to be sure.
11	I've got all three and I will send them to
12	you now, and, yeah, we don't have any further
13	questions.
14	THE VIDEOGRAPHER: If there's nothing else
15	for today's record, we will now go off the
16	record at 7:07 p.m.
17	(Whereupon, the deposition concluded at
18	7:07 p.m.)
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1	CERTIFICATE
2	
3	STATE OF GEORGIA:
4	FULTON COUNTY:
5	
6	I hereby certify that the foregoing
7	transcript of JUSTIN HILL 30(b)(6) was taken down,
8	as stated in the caption, and the questions and
9	answers thereto were reduced by stenographic means
10	under my direction;
11	That the foregoing Pages 1 through
12	134 represent a true and correct transcript of
13	the evidence given upon said hearing;
14	And I further certify that I am not of kin
15	or counsel to the parties in this case; am not in
16	the regular employ of counsel for any of said
17	parties; nor am I in anywise interested in the
18	result of said case.
19	
20	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
21	subscribed my name this 15th day of March, 2023.
22	Warle L. Robins
23	
24	Wanda L. Robinson, CRR, CCR No. B-1973
25	My Commission Expires 10/11/2023



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_	$\boldsymbol{\mathcal{L}}$		$\sim$	$\sim$		$\circ$	$\sim$	$\circ$		

2 | STATE OF GEORGIA ) 3/06/23 VIDEOTAPE DEPOSITION OF FULTON COUNTY ) JUSTIN HILL 30(b)(6)

3 Pursuant to Article 10.B of the Rules and

4 Regulations of the Board of Court Reporting

5 of the Judicial Council of Georgia, I make the

6 | following disclosure:

7 I am a Georgia certified court reporter.

8 | I am here as a representative of Esquire Deposition

9 | Solutions, LLC, and Esquire Deposition Solutions,

10 | LLC was contacted by the offices of U.S. Attorney's

11 Office to provide court reporter services for this

12 deposition. Esquire Deposition Solutions, LLC will

13 | not be taking this deposition under any contract

14 | that is prohibited by O.C.G.A. 9-11-28 (c).

Esquire Deposition Solutions, LLC has no contract/agreement to provide court reporter services with any party to the case, or any counsel in the case, or any reporter or reporting agency from whom a referral might have been made to cover

20 this deposition.

Esquire Deposition Solutions, LLC will charge the usual and customary rates to all parties in the case, and a financial discount will not be given to any party to this litigation.

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1	ERRATA SHEET FOR THE TRANSCRIPT OF:	
2	Deponent Name: JUSTIN HILL 30(b)(6)	
3	Case Caption: United States of America vs. State of Georgia	
4	or Georgia	
5	Case No. : 1:16-cv-03088-ELR	
6	I do hereby certify that I have read all questions propounded to me and all answers given by	
7	me on the 6th day of March, 2023, taken before Wanda L. Robinson, and that:	
8	H. RODINSON, and that.	
9	1) There are no changes noted.	
10	2) The following changes are noted:	
11	Pursuant to state rules of Civil Procedure and/or the Official Code of Georgia Annotated	
9-11-30(e), both of which read in part: Any char in form or substance which you desire to make sha		
l3 be entered upon the deposition with a statement	be entered upon the deposition with a statement of the reason given for making them.	
Accordingly, to assist you in effecting corrections, please use the form below:		
15	, -	
16	CORRECTIONS:	
17		
18	Page Line Change Reason For Change	
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		



1	CERTIFICATE OF DEPONENT
2	
3	I hereby certify that I have read and examined
4	the foregoing transcript, and the same is a true and
5	accurate record of the testimony given by me. Any
6	additions or corrections that I feel are necessary,
7	I will attach on a separate sheet of paper to the
8	original transcript.
9	
10	
11	Signature of Deponent
12	
13	I hereby certify that the individual
14	representing himself/herself to be the above-named
15	individual, appeared before me this day of
16	, 2023. and executed the above
17	certificate in my presence.
18	
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21	NOTARY PUBLIC
22	
23	MY COMMISSION EXPIRES:
24	
25	
	i



NITED STATES	S vs STATE OF (	SEORGIA		Index: \$225
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